

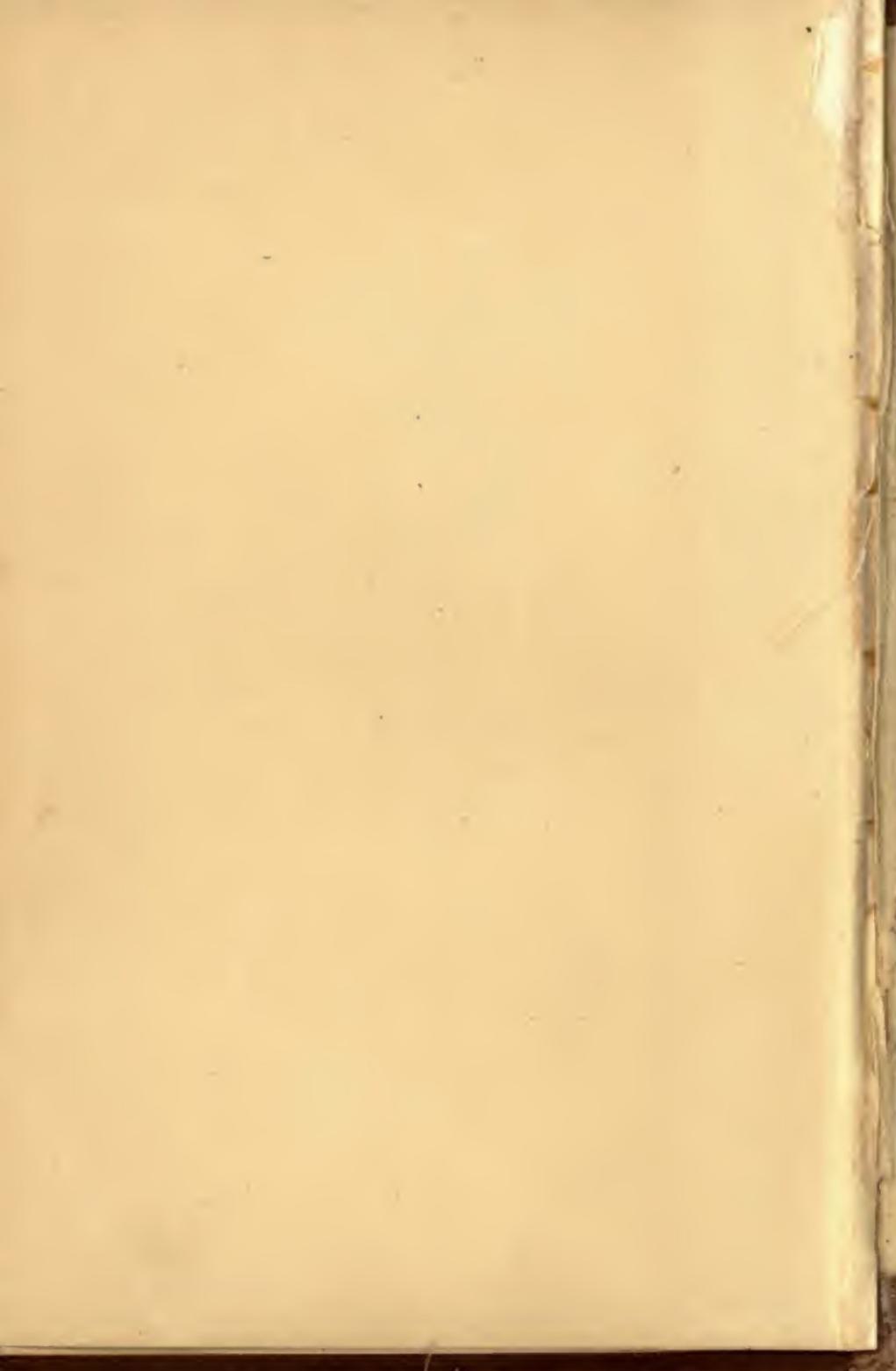
ENNYSON



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"But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chased his hands,
And call'd him by his name."

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

POETICAL WORKS

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON,

Author of "In Memoriam,"



1860.
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London.

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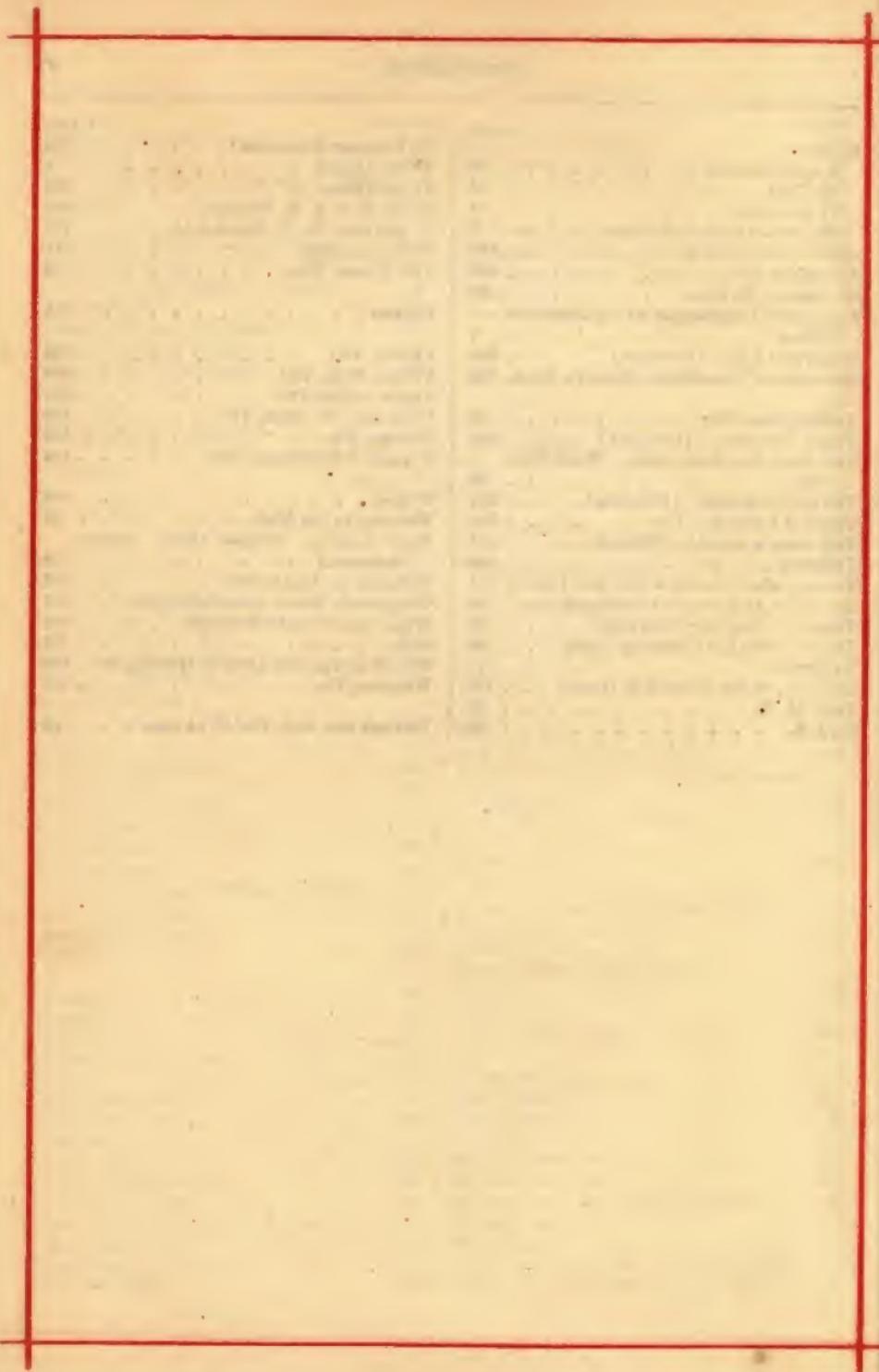
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TO THE QUEEN.

*Revered, beloved—O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brains, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria,—since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base;*

*And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there;*

*Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust*

*In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say,
"She wrought her people lasting good;*

*"Her court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen;*

*"And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*"By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compass'd by the inviolate sea."*

March, 1851.

JUVENILIA.

CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

I.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall :
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone ;
At midnight the moon cometh
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lispettoth,
The slumbrous wave outwelletth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot repliehth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be aweary of
flowing
Under my eye ?
When will the wind be aweary of
blowing
Over the sky ?

When will the clouds be aweary of
fleeting ?
When will the heart be aweary of
beating ?
And nature die ?
Never, oh ! never, nothing will die ;
The stream flows,
The wind blows,
The cloud fleets,
The heart beats,
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;
All things will change
Thro' eternity.
'Tis the world's winter;
Autumn and summer
Are gone long ago ;
Earth is dry to the centre,
But spring, a new comer,
A spring rich and strange,
Shall make the winds blow
Round and round,
Thro' and thro'.
Here and there,
Till the air
And the ground
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made ;
It will change, but it will not fade.
So let the wind range ;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Thro' eternity.
Nothing was born ;
Nothing will die ;
All things will change.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing
Under my eye;
Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing
Over the sky.
One after another the white clouds are fleeting;
Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating
Full merrily;
Yet all things must die.
The stream will cease to flow;
The wind will cease to blow;
The clouds will cease to fleet;
The heart will cease to beat;
For all things must die.
All things must die.
Spring will come never more.
Oh! vanity!
Death waits at the door.
See! our friends are all forsaking
The wine and the merrymaking.
We are call'd — we must go.
Laid low, very low,
In the dark we must lie.
The merry glees are still;
The voice of the bird
Shall no more be heard,
Nor the wind on the hill.
Oh! misery!
Hark! death is calling
While I speak to ye,
The jaw is falling,
The red cheek paling,
The strong limbs failing;
Ice with the warm blood mixing;
The eyeballs fixing.
Nine times goes the passing bell:
Ye merry souls, farewell.
The old earth
Had a birth,
As all men know,
Long ago.
And the old earth must die.
So let the warm winds range,
And the blue wave beat the shore;
For even and morn
Ye will never see
Thro' eternity.

All things were born.
Ye will come never more,
For all things must die.

LEONINE ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming
the broad valley dimm'd in the gloaming:
Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only
the far river shines.
Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-blown bushes,
Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall.
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly; the grasshopper caroleth clearly;
Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly
the owl halloos;
Winds creep; dews fall chilly: in her first sleep earth breathes stilly:
Over the pools in the burn water-gnats murmur and mourn.
Sadly the far kine loweth: the glimmering water out-floweth:
Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to the dark hyaline.
Low-throned Hesper is stayed between
the two peaks; but the Naiad
Throbbing in mild unrest holds him beneath in her breast.
The ancient poetess singeth, that Hesperus all things bringeth,
Smoothing the wearied mind: bring me my love, Rosalind.
Thou comest morning or even; she cometh not morning or even.
False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my sweet Rosalind?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND.

O God! my God! have mercy now.
I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou
Didst die for me, for such as me,
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,
And that my sin was as a thorn

Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,
Wounding Thy soul.—That even now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumbrous summer
noon.

While I do pray to Thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow:
Is not my human pride brought low?
The boastings of my spirit still?
The joy I had in my freewill
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like
grown?

And what is left to me, but Thou
And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;
Christians with happy countenances—
And children all seem full of Thee!
And women smile with saint-like
glances

Like Thine own mother's when she
bow'd

Above Thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And Thou and peace to earth were
born,

Goodwill to me as well as all—
I one of them: my brothers they:
Brothers in Christ—a world of peace
And confidence, day after day;
And trust and hope till things should
cease,

And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!
To hold a common scorn of death!

And at a burial to hear
The creaking cords which wound and
eat

Into my human heart, whene'er
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not
fear,

With hopeful grief, were passing
sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee!
Who lets his rosy fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
They comfort him by night and day;
They light his little life alway;

He hath no thought of coming woes;
He hath no care of life or death;
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
Because the Spirit of happiness
And perfect rest so inward is;
And loveth so his innocent heart,
Her temple and her place of birth,
Where she would ever wish to dwell,
Life of the fountain there, beneath
Its salient springs, and far apart,
Hating to wander out on earth,
Or breathe into the hollow air,
Whose chillness would make visible
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,
Which mixing with the infant's blood,
Fulfils him with beatitude.
Oh! sure it is a special care
Of God, to fortify from doubt,
To arm in proof, and guard about
With triple-mailed trust, and clear
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
As thine, my mother, when with brows
Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—
For me unworthy!—and beheld
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew
The beauty and repose of faith,
And the clear spirit shining thro'.
Oh! wherefore do we grow awry
From roots which strike so deep? why
dare

Paths in the desert? Could not I
Bow myself down, where thou hast
knelt,
To the earth—until the ice would
melt

Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?
What Devil had the heart to seathe
Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush
the dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I
So little love for thee? But why
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why
pray

To one who heeds not, who can save
But will not? Great in faith, and
strong

Against the grief of circumstance
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
Unto the death, not sunk! I know
At matins and at evensong,
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,
In deep and daily prayers would'st
 strive

To reconcile me with thy God.
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
At heart, thou wouldest murmur
 still —

"Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,
My Lord, if so it be Thy will."
Wouldst tell me I must brook the rod
And chastisement of human pride;
That pride, the sin of devils, stood
Betwixt me and the light of God!
That hitherto I had defied
And had rejected God — that grace
Would drop from his o'er-brimming
 love,

As manna on my wilderness,
If I would pray — that God would
 move
And strike the hard, hard rock, and
 thence,
Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
Would issue tears of penitence
Which would keep green hope's life.
Alas!

I think that pride hath now no place
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet
Anchor thy frailty there, where man
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea
At midnight, when the crisp slope
 waves

After a tempest, rib and fret
The broad-imbased beach, why he
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?
Wherefore his ridges are not curlis
And ripples of an inland mere?
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can
Draw down into his vexed pools
All that blue heaven which hues and
 paves

The other? I am too forlorn,
Too shaken: my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt and
 fear.

"Yet," said I in my morn of youth,
The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,
When I went forth in quest of truth,
"It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length,
Truth may stand forth unmoved of
 change,

An image with profulgent brows,
And perfect limbs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the Ox
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
The horned valleys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills
In summer heats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,
And answers to his mother's calls
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,
Of which he wots not, run short pains
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from
 whence

He knows not, on his light there falls
A shadow; and his native slope,
Where he was wont to leap and climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
And something in the darkness draws
His forehead earthward, and he dies.
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
Living, but that he shall live on?
Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that
 seem,

And things that be, and analyze
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the one,
If one there be?" Ay me! I fear
All may not doubt, but everywhere
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove
Shadow me over, and my sins

Be unremember'd, and Thy love
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet
Somewhat before the heavy clod
Weighs on me, and the busy fret
Of that sharp-headed worm begins
In the gross blackness underneath.
O weary life! O weary death!
O spirit and heart made desolate!
O damned vacillating state!

THE KRAKEN.

BELLOW the thunders of the upper deep;
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sun-lights flee
About his shadowy sides: above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth
and height;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.
There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

SONG.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,
Leaning upon the ridged sea,
Breathed low around the rolling earth
With mellow preludes, "We are free."
The streams through many a lilyed row
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
Atween the blossoms, "We are free."

LILIAN.

I.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Clasps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,
She, looking thro' and thro' me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks:
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gathered wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughers dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks;
Then away she flies.

III.

Prithee weep, May Lilian!
Gayety without eclipse
Wearieh me, May Lilian:
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth:
Prithee weep, May Lilian.

IV.

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL.

I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright,
but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended
by
Pure vestal thoughts in the trans-lucent fane

Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dispread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlyhead.

II.

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime; a prudence to withhold;
The laws of marriage character'd in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
Winning its way with extreme gentleness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride;
A courage to endure and to obey;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
Till in its onward current it absorbs
With swifter movement and in purer light
The vexed eddies of its wayward brother:
A leaning and upbearing parasite,

Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite
With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs
Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other—
Shadow forth thee: — the world hath not another
(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA.

"Mariana in the moated grange."
Measure for Measure.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her easement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low

Came to her : without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed
morn

About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark :
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and
away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their
cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane ; the
mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot
shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrows chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense ; but most she loathed the
hour
When the thick-moated sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said ;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
Oh, God, that I were dead!"

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines :
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and
morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all
alone,
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest
brown
To left and right, and made appear
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And "Ave Mary," was her moan,
"Madonna, sad is night and
morn,"
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all
alone,
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,

Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load."
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.

"Is this the form," she made her
moan,
"That won his praises night
and morn?"
And "Ah," she said, "but I wake
alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake for-
lorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would
bleat,

Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain
grass,

And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower
moan,
And murmuring, as at night and
morn,

She thought, "My spirit is here
alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke: the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sear and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.

She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or
morn,
"Sweet Mother, let me not here
alone
Live forgotten, and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs
be true,

To what is loveliest upon earth." An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say
"But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone forevermore."

"O cruel heart," she changed her
tone,
"And cruel love, whose end is
scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die for
lorn?"

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
"But thou shalt be alone no more."
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
"The day to night," she made her
moan,
"The day to night, the night to
morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent
spheres
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
"The night comes on that knows
not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful
scorn,
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts
atwain

The knots that tangle human creeds,
The wounding cords that bind and strain
The heart until it bleeds.
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as thine :
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords
Can do away that ancient lie ;
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,
And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;
Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,
And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE.

I.

THOU are not steep'd in golden languors,
No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites and darling angers,
And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles : but who may know
Whether smile or frown be fletter ?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know ?
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother ;
Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momently shot into each other.
All the mystery is thine ;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

III.

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,
About thee breaks and dances :
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown :
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,
Woest not, nor vainly wranglest ;
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile ;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angrily ;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG : THE OWL.

I.

WHEN cats run home and light is come
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,

And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely snells the new-mown
hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the
thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

I.

Tuw tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice untuneful grown,
Wears all day a fainter tone.

II.

I would mock thy chant anew;
But I cannot mimic it;
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-
o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn
blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,

For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A night my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and
clove
The citron-shadows in the blue:
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side:
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans
guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which
crept
Adown to where the water slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they
climb
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the
dome
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green ravage many a fall
Of diamond rilles musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fall'n silver-climing, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-color'd shells
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odor in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;
Not he : but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
Apart from place, withholding time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grotts
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were
ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :
A sudden splendor from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-
green,

And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame :
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-checker'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing
round

The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed visions unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedar doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all aight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Baglat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous
time
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underprop't a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which

Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of
gold.

Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him — in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO — .

I.

THOU who steals fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire!
Strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight
On the white day; but robed in soft-
en'd light
Of orient state.
Whilom thou camest with the morn-
ing mist,
Even as a maid, whose stately brow
The dew-impearled winds of dawn
have kiss'd.
When, she, as thou,
Stays on her floating locks the lovely
freight
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest
shoots
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of
fruits,
Which in wintertide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilom thou camest with the morn-
ing mist,
And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my
open breast
(Those peerless flowers which in the
rudest wind

Never grow sear,
When rooted in the garden of the
mind,
Because they are the earliest of the
year).

Nor was the night thy shroud.
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken
rest

Thou leddest by the hand thine infant
Hope.
The eddying of her garments caught
from thee
The light of thy great presence; and
the cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,
Tho' deep not fathomless,
Was cloven with the million stars
which tremble
O'er the deep mind of dauntless in-
fancy.
Small thought was there of life's dis-
tress;
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth
could dull
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and
beautiful:
Sure she was nigher to heaven's
spheres,
Listening the lordly music flowing
from

The illimitable years.
O strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad
eyes!
Thou comest not with showers of
flaunting vines
Unto mine inner eye,
Divinest Memory!

Thou wert not nursed by the water-
fall

Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:
Come from the woods that belt the
gray hill-side,
The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door,

And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed
sand,
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,
The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-
land,
O! hither lead thy feet!
Pour round mine ears the livelong
bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wat-
tered folds,
Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath
waken'd loud
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung
cloud.

v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present
When first she is wed;
And like a bride of old
In triumph led,
With music and sweet showers
Of festal flowers,
Unto the dwelling she must sway.
Well hast thou done, great artist
Memory,
In setting round thy first experiment
With royal frame-work of wrought
gold;
Needs must thou dearly love thy first
essay,
And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight
falls
Upon the storied walls;
For the discovery
And newness of thine art so pleased
thee,
That all which thou hast drawn of
fairest
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-
like,
Ever retiring thou dost gaze
On the prime labor of thine early days:

No matter what the sketch might be;
Whether the high field on the bush-
less Pike,
Or even a sand-built ridge
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
Overblown with murmurs harsh,
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste
enormous marsh,
Where from the frequent bridge,
Like emblems of infinity,
The trenched waters run from sky to
sky;
Or a garden bower'd close
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
Long alleys falling down to twilight
grots,
Or opening upon level plots
Of crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender:
Whither in after life retired
From brawling storms,
From weary wind,
With youthful fancy re-inspired,
We may hold converse with all
forms
Of the many-sided mind,
And those whom passion hath not
blinded,
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.
My friend, with you to live alone,
Were how much better than to own
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!
O strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG.

I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing
bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and
sigh
In the walks;
Earthward he boweth the heavy
stalks

Of the mouldering flowers :

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so
chilly;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh
repose

An hour before death ;
My very heart faints and my whole
soul grieves

At the moist rich smell of the rotting
leaves,

And the breath

Of the fading edges of box
beneath,

And the year's last rose.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so
chilly;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily

A CHARACTER.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, "The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach me the nothin'ness of things."
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty ; that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his
hair,

And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by :
And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvass'd human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold :
Upon himself himself did feed :
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above ;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the
scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro'
good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul,
The marvel of the everlasting will
An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he
threaded
The secretest walks of fame :
The viewless arrows of his thoughts
were headed
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his sil-
ver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which
bore
Them earthward till they lit ;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field
flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing
forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,

Like to the' mother plant in sem-blance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
Thy winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth,
the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame

WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.

And when she spoke,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,

And as the lightning to the thunder

Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,

Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.
No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with his word
She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND.

I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit:
Vex not thou the poet's mind;
For thou canst not fathom it.
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear;
All the place is holy ground;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.
Holy water will I pour
Into every spicy flower
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.

In your eye there is death,
There is frost in your breath
Which would blight the plants.
Where you stand you cannot hear
From the groves within
The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants.
It would fall to the ground if you came in.

In the middle leaps a fountain
Like sheet lightning,
Ever brightening
With a low melodious thunder;
All day and all night it is ever drawn
From the brain of the purple mountain
Which stands in the distance yonder:

It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
And the mountain draws it from
Heaven above,

And it sings a song of undying love ;
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and
 full,
 You never would hear it; your ears
 are so dull;
 So keep where you are: you are foul
 with sin;
 It would shrink to the earth if you
 came in.

THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and
 saw,
 Betwixt the green brink and the run-
 ning foam,
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms
 prest
 To little harps of gold; and while they
 mused
 Whispering to each other half in fear,
 Shril music reach'd them on the mid-
 dle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither
 away ? fly no more.
 Whither away from the high green
 field, and the happy blossoming
 shore ?
 Day and night to the bellow the foun-
 tain calls:
 Down shower the gambolling water-
 falls
 From wandering over the lea :
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells
 They freshen the silvery-crimson
 shells,
 And thick with white bells the clover-
 hill swells
 High over the full-toned sea :
 O hither, come hither and furl your
 sails,
 Come hither to me and to me :
 Hither, come hither and frolic and
 play ;
 Here it is only the mew that wails ;
 We will sing to you all the day :
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
 For here are the blissful downs and
 dales,
 And merrily, merrily carol the gales,

And the spangle dances in bight and
 bay,
 And the rainbow forms and flies on
 the land
 Over the islands free ;
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of
 the sand ;
 Hither, come hither and see ;
 And the rainbow hangs on the poising
 wave,
 And sweet is the color of cove and
 cave,
 And sweet shall your welcome be :
 O hither, come hither, and be our
 lords,
 For merry brides are we :
 We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak
 sweet words :
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 With pleasure and love and jubilee :
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 When the sharp clear twang of the
 golden chords
 Runs up the ridged sea.
 Who can light on as happy a shore
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?
 Whither away ? listen and stay :
 mariner, mariner, fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away
 Side by side,
 Leaving door and windows wide :
 Careless tenants they !

II.

All within is dark as night :
 In the windows is no light ;
 And no murmur at the door,
 So frequent on its hinge before.

III.

Close the door, the shutters close,
 Or thro' the windows we shall see
 The nakedness and vacancy
 Of the dark deserted house.

IV.

Come away : no more of mirth
 Is here or merry-making sound.

The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

v.

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have staid with us!

THE DYING SWAN.

I.

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did
sigh;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marish green
and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and
yellow.

III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the
soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and
clear;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach
stole

Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and
harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is
roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the
evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clambering
weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and
dank,
And the wavy swell of the soothings
reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing
bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that
throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

I.

Now is done thy long day's work;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;
Chanteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny?
Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;
The woodbine and eglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.
Let them rave.
Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.
Let them rave.
These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.
Let them rave.
Kings have no such conch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII.

Wild words wander here and there :
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused :
But let them rave.
The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was
gathering light
Love paced the thymy plots of Para-
dise,
And all about him roll'd his lustrous
eyes ;
When, turning round a cassia, full in
view,
Death, walking all alone beneath a
yew,

And talking to himself, first met his
sight :
" You must begone," said Death,
" these walks are mine."
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans
for flight ;
Yet ere he parted said, " This hour is
thine :
Thou art the shadow of life, and as
the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all
beneath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of
death ;
The shadow passeth when the tree
shall fall,
But I shall reign forever over all."

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.
There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd
with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds
blow,
Oriana,
Alone I wander to and fro,
Oriana.
Ere the light on dark was growing,
Oriana,
At midnight the cock was crowing,
Oriana :
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,
Oriana ;
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
Oriana.
In the yew-wood black as night,
Oriana,
Ere I rode into the fight,
Oriana,
While blissful tears blinded my sight
By star-shine and by moonlight,
Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
Oriana :
She watch'd my crest among them all,
Oriana :
She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stept a foeman tall,
Oriana,
Atween me and the castle wall,
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
Oriana :
The false, false arrow went aside,
Oriana :
The damned arrow glanceed aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my
bride,
Oriana !
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,
Oriana.
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
Oriana.
Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
The battle deepen'd in its place,
Oriana ;
But I was down upon my face,
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I
lay,
Oriana !

How could I rise and come away,
Oriana ?

How could I look upon the day ?
They should have stabb'd me where I
lay,
Oriana —

They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana !

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana !

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my cheek,
Oriana :

What wantest thou ? whom dost thou
seek,
Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,
Oriana.
Thou comest betwix me and the skies,
Oriana.
I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.
Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !
Oriana !
O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana !
All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
Oriana.
A weary, weary way I go,
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the
sea,
Oriana,
I walk, I dare not think of thee,
Oriana.
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
I dare not die and come to thee,
Oriana.
I hear the roaring of the sea,
Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbor villages
Playing mad pranks along the heathy-
leas ;
Two strangers meeting at a festival ;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard
wall ;
Two lives bound fast in one with
golden ease ;
Two graves grass-green beside a gray
church-tower,
Wash'd with still rains and daisy blos-
somed ;
Two children in one hamlet born and
bred ;
So runs the round of life from hour
to hour.

THE MERMAN.

I.

Who would be
A merman bold,
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne ?

II.

I would be a merman bold,
I would sit and sing the whole of the day;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power;
But at night I would roam abroad and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower;
And holding them back by their flowing locks
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me

Laughingly, laughingly ;

And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight
and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

III.

There would be neither moon nor star;
But the wave would make music above us afar—
Low thunder and light in the magic night—
Neither moon nor star.
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily;
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their hands between,
All night, merrily, merrily :
But I would throw to them back in mine

Turkis and agate and almondine :
Then leaping out upon them unseen
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly.

Oh ! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;
We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID.

I.

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne ?

II.

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
“ Who is it loves me ? who loves not me ? ”

I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall

Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold

Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne

In the midst of the hall;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps

Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.

And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III.

But at night I would wander away,
away,
I would fling on each side my low-
flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and
play
With the mermen in and out of the
rocks;
We would run to and fro, and hide
and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds in the crim-
son shells,
Whose silvery spikes are highest the
sea.
But if any came near I would call, and
shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I
would leap
From the diamond-ledges that jut
from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who
would list,
Of the bold merry mermen under the
sea;
They would sue me, and woo me, and
flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the
sea;
But the king of them all would carry
me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry
me,
In the branching jaspers under the
sea;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet
silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned,
and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere
of the sea,
All looking down for the love of
me.

ADELINE.

I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair
With thy floating flaxen hair ;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my
breast.
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

II.

Whence that airy bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro' in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,
Ere the placid lips be cold ?
Wherefore those faint smiles of
thine,
Spiritual Adeline ?

III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?
Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?
For sure thou art not all alone,
Do beating hearts of salient
springs
Keep measure with thine own ?
Hast thou heard the butterflies
What they say betwixt their
wings ?
Or in stillest evenings
With what voice the violet woos
To his heart the silver dews ?
Or when little airs arise,
How the merry bluebell rings
To the mosses underneath ?
Hast thou look'd upon the breath
Of the lilies at sunrise ?
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
Shadowy, dreamy Adeline ?

IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
Some spirit of a crimson rose
In love with thee forgets to close
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
All night long on darkness blind.
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

V.

Lovest thou the doleful wind
When thou gazest at the skies?
Doth the low-tongued Orient
Wander from the side of the
morn,
Dripping with Sabaean spice
On thy pillow, lowly bent
With melodious airs lovelorn,
Breathing Light against thy face,
While his locks a-drooping twined
Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a carcanet of rays,
And ye talk together still,
In the language wherewith Spring
Letters cowslips on the hill?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.

MARGARET.

I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
Of pensive thought and aspect
pale,
Your melancholy sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
From all things outward you have
won
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
Between the rainbow and the sun.
The very smile before you speak,
That dimples your transparent
cheek,

Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
The senses with a still delight
Of dainty sorrow without sound,
Like the tender amber round,
Which the moon about her spread-
eth,
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II.

You love, remaining peacefully,
To hear the murmur of the strife,
But enter not the toil of life.
Your spirit is the calmed sea,
Laid by the tumult of the fight.
You are the evening star, alway
Remaining betwixt dark and
bright:
Lull'd echoes of laborious day
Come to you, gleams of mellow
light
Float by you on the verge of
night.

III.

What can it matter, Margaret,
What songs below the waning
stars
The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
Sang looking thro' his prison
bars?
Exquisite Margaret, who can
tell
The last wild thought of Chatelet,
Just ere the falling axe did part
The burning brain from the true
heart,
Even in her sight he loved so
well?

IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made
And gave you on your natal day.
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
Keeps real sorrow far away.
You move not in such solitudes,
You are not less divine,
But more human in your moods,
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
Touch'd with a somewhat darker
hue,
And less aerially blue,

But ever-trembling thro' the dew
Of dainty-woful sympathies.

v.

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
Come down, come down, and hear me
speak :

Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :
The sun is just about to set,
The arching limes are tall and shady,
And faint, rainy lights are seen,

Moving in the leavy beech.
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
Where all day long you sit
between

Joy and woe, and whisper each.
Or only look across the lawn,
Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes
dawn

Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

ROSALIND.

I.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
Whose free delight, from any height
of rapid flight,
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon
whither,
Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up or down the streaming wind ?

II.

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd
strains,
The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightning flash betwix the rains,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.
You care not for another's pains,

Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your
veins,

And flashes off a thousand ways,
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me thro' with pointed light;
But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :
Too long you keep the upper skies ;
Too long you roam and wheel at will ;
But we must hood your random eyes,
That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
Some red heath-flower in the dew,
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
And clip your wings, and make you
love :

When we have lured you from above,
And that delight of frolic flight, by
day or night,
From North to South,
We'll bind you fast in silken cords
And kiss away the bitter words
From off your rosy mouth.

ELEÄNORE.

I.

Thy dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to
English air,
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward
brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighborhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer
morn,

A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
 Thy bounteous forehead was not
 fann'd
 With breezes from our oaken
 glades,
 But thou wert nursed in some delicious
 land
 Of lavish lights, and floating
 shades:
 And flattering thy childish thought
 The oriental fairy brought,
 At the moment of thy birth,
 From old well-heads of haunted rills,
 And the hearts of purple hills,
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny
 shore,
 The choicest wealth of all the
 earth,
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
 To deck thy cradle, Eleäno're.

II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,
 Thro' half-open lattices
 Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy gar-
 dens cull'd —
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding
 down,
 With the hum of swarming bees
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

III.

Who may minister to thee?
 Summer herself should minister
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and
 blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like
 flower
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,
 And the crag that fronts the Even,
 All along the shadowing shore,
 Crimson's over an inland mere,
 Eleäno're!

IV.
 How many full-sail'd verse express,
 How many measured words adore
 The full-flowing harmony
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleäno're?
 The luxuriant symmetry
 Of thy floating gracefulness,
 Eleäno're?
 Every turn and glance of thine,
 Every lineament divine,
 Eleäno're,
 And the steady sunset glow,
 That stays upon thee? For in thee
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single;
 Like two streams of incense free
 From one censer in one shrine,
 Thought and motion mingle,
 Mingle ever. Motions flow
 To one another, even as tho'
 They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
 Who may express thee, Eleäno're?

V.

I stand before thee, Eleäno're;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
 Daily and hourly, more and more.
 I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes
 Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
 To stand apart, and to adore,
 Gazing on thee forevermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleäno're!

VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity
 Gazing, I seem to see
 Thought folded over thought, smiling
 asleep,
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd
 quite,

I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
But am as nothing in its light :
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
Ev'n while we gaze on it,
Should slowly round his orb, and
slowly grow
To a full face, there like a sun remain
Fix'd — then as slowly fade again,
And draw itself to what it was
before ;
So full, so deep, so slow,
Thought seems to come and go
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
Roof'd the world with doubt and
fear,
Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
Grow golden all about the sky ;
In thee all passion becomes passionless,
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
Losing his fire and active might
In a silent meditation,
Falling into a still delight,
And luxury of contemplation :
As waves that up a quiet cove
Rolling slide, and lying still
Shadow forth the banks at will :
Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,
With motions of the outer sea :
And the self-same influence
Controlleth all the soul and sense
Of Passion gazing upon thee.
His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
Droops both his wings, regarding
thee,
And so would languish evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore.

VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses
unconfined,
While the amorous, odorous wind
Breathes low between the sunset
and the moon ;
Or, in a shadowy saloon,
On silken cushions half reclined ;

I watch thy grace ; and in its
place
My heart a charm'd slumber
keeps,
While I muse upon thy face ;
And a languid fire creeps
Thro' my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly : soon
From thy rose-red lips MY name
Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,
With dimming sound my ears are
rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my color, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of
warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from
thee ;
Yet tell my name again to me,
I would be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleänore.

I.

My life is full of weary days,
But good things have not kept aloof,
Nor wander'd into other ways :
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink
Of that deep grave to which I go :
Shake hands once more : I cannot sink
So far — far down, but I shall know
Thy voice, and answer from below.

II.

When in the darkness over me
The four-handed mole shall scrape,
Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,
Nor wreath thy cap with doleful
crape,
But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood
Grow green beneath the showery
gray,
And rugged barks begin to bud,

And thro' damp holts new-flush'd
with may,
Ring sudden scritches of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,
And on my clay her darnel grow;
Come only, when the days are still,
And at my headstone whisper low,
And tell me if the woodbines blow.

EARLY SONNETS.

I.

TO —.

As when with downcast eyes we muse
and brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in some confused
dream
To states of mystical similitude ;
If one but speaks or hums or stirs his
chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and
more,
So that we say, " All this hath been
before,
All this hath been, I know not when
or where."
So, friend, when first I look'd upon
your face,
Our thought gave answer each to each,
so true—
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—
That tho' I knew not in what time or
place,
Methought that I had often met with
you,
And either lived in either's heart and
speech.

II.

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee— thou
wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the
master's feast ;
Our dusted velvets have much need
of thee :
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old
saws,

Distill'd from some worm-canker'd
homily ;
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy
cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-
drone
Half God's good sabbath, while the
worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thot
from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the
dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and
mark.

III.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full
and free,
Like some broad river rushing down
alone,
With the self-same impulse wherewith
he was thrown
From his loud fount upon the echoing
lea :—
Which with increasing might doth for-
ward flee
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape,
and isle,
And in the middle of the green salt sea
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many
a mile.
Mine be the power which ever to its
sway
Will win the wise at once, and by
degrees
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;
Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of
Florida
Floats far away into the Northern seas
The lavish growths of southern Mex-
ico.

IV.

ALEXANDER.

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right
arm debased
The throne of Persia, when her Satrap
bled
At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled
Beyond the Memnian naphtha-pits,
disgraced

Forever — thee (thy pathway sand-
erased)
Gliding with equal crowns two ser-
pents led
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.
There in a silent shade of laurel brown
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine
Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries :
High things were spoken there, un-
handed down ;
Only they saw thee from the secret
shrine
Returning with hot cheek and kindled
eyes.

v.

BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn
hearts of oak,
Madman ! — to chain with chains, and
bind with bands
That island queen who sways the floods
and lands,
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight
woke,
When from her wooden walls, — lit by
sure hands, —
With thunders, and with lightnings,
and with smoke, —
Peal after peal, the British battle
broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic
sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when
Elsinore
Heard the war moan along the distant
sea,
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with
sudden fires
Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once
more
We taught him : late he learned
humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon
school'd with briers.

vi.

POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden
down,

And trampled under by the last and
least
Of men ? The heart of Poland hath
not ceased
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth
drown
The fields, and out of every smoulder-
ing town
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-
creased,
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the
East
Transgress his ample bound to some
new crown : —
Cries to Thee, " Lord, how long shall
these things be ?
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region ? " Us, O Just and
Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn
in three ;
Us, who stand now, when we should
aid the right —
A matter to be wept with tears of
blood !

vii.

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender
hand,
And singing airy trifles this or that,
Light Hope at Beauty's call would
perch and stand,
And run thro' every change of sharp
and flat ;
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy
band,
And chased away the still-recurring
gnat,
And woke her with a lay from fairy
land.
But now they live with Beauty less
and less,
For Hope is other Hope and wanders
far,
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious
creeds ;
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
Poor Fancy sadder than a single
star,
That sets at twilight in a land of
reeds.

VIII.

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!
A nobler yearning never broke her
rest
Than but to dance and sing, be gayly
drest,
And win all eyes with all accomplish-
ment:
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,
My fancy made me for a moment blest
To find my heart so near the beauteous
breast
That once had power to rob it of con-
tent.
A moment came the tenderness of
tears,
The phantom of a wish that once could
move,
A ghost of passion that no smiles re-
store —
For ah! the slight coquette, she can-
not love,
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand
years,
She still would take the praise, and
care no more.

IX.

WAN Sculptor, weepest thou to take
the cast
Of those dead lineaments that near
thee lie?
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the
past,
In painting some dead friend from
memory?
Weep on: beyond his object Love can
last:
His object lives: more cause to weep
have I:
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing
fast,
No tears of love, but tears that Love
can die.
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
Nor care to sit beside her where she
sits —
Ah pity — hint it not in human tones,
But breathe it into earth and close it
up

With secret death forever, in the pits
Which some green Christmas crams
with weary bones.

X.

If I were loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of
the earth,
And range of evil between death and
birth,
That I should fear, — if I were loved
by thee?
All the inner, all the outer world of
pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave,
if thou wert mine,
As I have heard that, somewhere in
the main,
Fresh-water springs come up through
bitter brine.
"Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-
hand with thee,
To wait for death — mute — careless
of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand
hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into
the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

XI.

THE BRIDESMAID.

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot
was tied,
Thine eyes so wept that they could
hardly see;
Thy sister smiled and said, "No tears
for me!
A happy bridesmaid makes a happy
bride."
And then, the couple standing side by
side,
Love lighted down between them full
of glee,
And over his left shoulder laugh'd at
thee,
"O happy bridesmaid, make a happy
bride."
And all at once a pleasant truth I
learn'd,

For while the tender service made thee weep,
I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not hide,
And prest thy hand, and knew the press return'd,
And thought, "My life is sick of single sleep:
O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride!"

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side of the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle embowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd.
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,

Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two;
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight forever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.

The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight
glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse
trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

Is the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,

The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining,
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white,
That loosely flew to left and right —
The leaves upon her falling light —
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

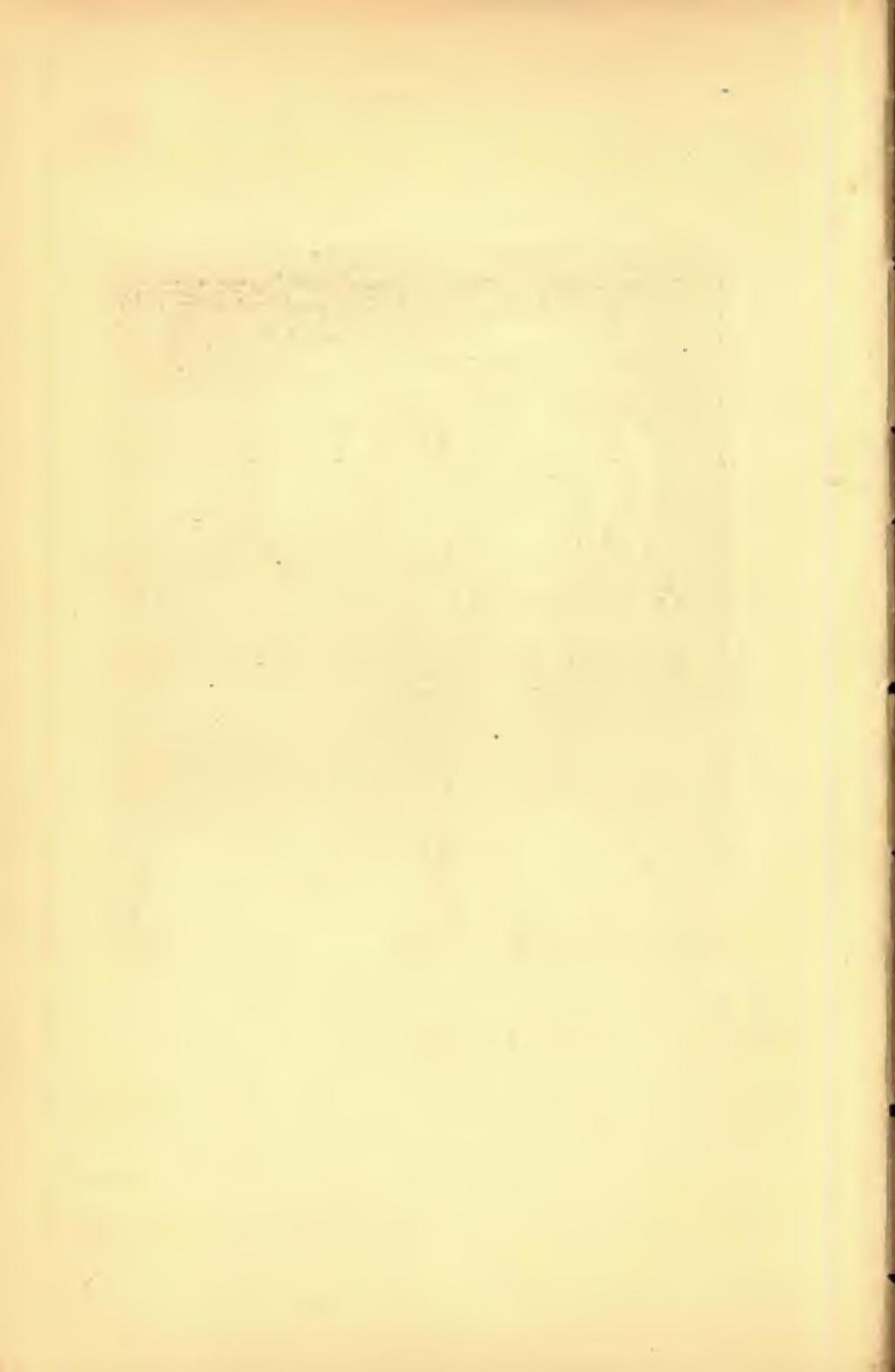
Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her
name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near



*"Out flew the web and floated wide ;
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott."*

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.



Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,

All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

THE TWO VOICES.

A **STILL** small voice spake unto me,
"Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?"

Then to the still small voice I said;
"Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply;
"To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings: like gauze they
grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

I said, "When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

"She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied;
"Self-blinded are you by your pride:
Look up thro'night: the world is wide.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and
fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?"

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
"Tho' thouwert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall:
"No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answer'd scoffingly;
"Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

"Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?"

I would have said, "Thou canst not
know,"
But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:
"Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be."

"Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep:
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt
weep."

I said, "The years with change ad-
vance:
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

"Some turn this sickness yet might
take,
Ev'n yet." But he: "What drug can
make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?"

I wept, "Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

"And men, thro' novel spheres of
thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not."

" Yet," said the secret voice, " some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

" Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

" Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that " all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

" Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power ? "

" The highest-mounted mind," he said,
" Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

" Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main ?

" Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town ?

" Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

" Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

" Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

" Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought re-sign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, " When I am gone away,
' He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay."

" This is more vile," he made reply,
" To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die

" Sick art thou — a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

" Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

" The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

" Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
Hears little of the false or just."

" Hard task, to pluck resolve," I cried,
" From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

" Nay — rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

" When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

" I sung the joyful Paean clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

" Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life —

" Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love —

"As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb
about —

"To search through all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law :

"At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

"To pass when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause —

"In some good cause, not in mine own
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown ;

"Whose eyes are dim with glorious
tears,
When soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

"Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is roiled in smoke."

"Yea ! " said the voice, " thy dream
was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

"If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour ?

"Then comes the check, the change,
the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

"Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
Link'd month to month with such a
chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

"Thou hadst not between death and
birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labor little-worth.

"That men with knowledge merely
play'd,
I told thee — hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade ;

"Much less this dreamer, deaf and
blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to
find,
That bears relation to the mind.

"For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and
soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

"Cry, faint not : either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

"Cry, faint not, climb : the summits
slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to
cope.

"Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

"I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

"If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou
dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

"And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

"Than angels. Cease to wail and
brawl !
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I,
"Wilt thou make every thing a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

"I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

"I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven:

"Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;

"But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head—

"Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched tire.

"He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised
with stones:

"But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

The sullen answer slid betwixt:
"Not that the grounds of hope were
fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd."

I said, "I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

"And that, in seeking to undo,
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new:

"Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence:

"For I go, weak from suffering here:
Naked I go, and void of cheer:
What is it that I may not fear?"

"Consider well," the voice replied,
"His face, that two hours since hath
died;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

"Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his hands?
He answers not, nor understands.

"His palms are folded on his breast:
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

"His lips are very mild and meek:
Tho' one should smite him on the
cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

"His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race—

"His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honor, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

"He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

"High up the vapors fold and swim:
About him broods the twilight dim:
The place he knew forgetteth him."

"If all be dark, vague voice," I said,
"These things are wrapt in doubt and
dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

"The sap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

"I found him when my years were few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

"From grave to grave the shadow
crept:
In her still place the morning wept:
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

"The simple senses crown'd his head :
 'Omega ! thou art Lord,' they said,
 'We find no motion in the dead.'

"Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
 Should that plain fact, as taught by
 these,
 Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

"Who forged that other influence,
 That heat of inward evidence,
 By which he doubts against the sense ?

"He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
 That read his spirit blindly wise,
 Not simple as a thing that dies.

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly :
 His heart forebodes a mystery :
 He names the name Eternity.

"That type of Perfect in his mind
 In Nature can he nowhere find.
 He sows himself on every wind.

"He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
 And thro' thick veils to apprehend
 A labor working to an end.

"The end and the beginning vex
 His reason : many things perplex,
 With motions, checks, and counter-
 checks.

"He knows a baseness in his blood
 At such strange war with something
 good,
 He may not do the thing he would.

"Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
 Vast images in glimmering dawn,
 Half shown, are broken and with-
 drawn.

"Ah ! sure within him and without,
 Could his dark wisdom find it out,
 There must be answer to his doubt.

* But thou canst answer not again.
 With thine own weapon art thou slain,
 Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

"The doubt would rest, I dare not
 solve.
 In the same circle we revolve.
 Assurance only breeds resolve."

As when a billow, blown against,
 Falls back, the voice with which I
 fenced
 A little ceased, but recommenced.

"Where wert thou when thy father
 play'd
 In his free field, and pastime made,
 A merry boy in sun and shade ?

"A merry boy they call'd him then.
 He sat upon the knees of men
 In days that never come again.

"Before the little duets began
 To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
 Their course, till thou wert also man :

"Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,
 Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
 Whose troubles number with his days :

"A life of nothing, nothing-worth,
 From that first nothing ere his birth
 To that last nothing under earth !"

"These words," I said, "are like the
 rest ;
 No certain clearness, but at best
 A vague suspicion of the breast :

"But if I grant, thou mightst defend
 The thesis which thy words intend —
 That to begin implies to end ;

"Yet how should I for certain hold
 Because my memory is so cold,
 That I first was in human mould ?

"I cannot make this matter plain,
 But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
 A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,
 Which only to one engine bound
 Falls off, but cycles always round.

To be the long and listless boy
 Late-left an orphan of the squire,
 Where this old mansion mounted high
 Looks down upon the village spire :
 For even here, where I and you
 Have lived and loved alone so long,
 Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
 By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
 In firry woodlands making moan ;
 But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
 I had no motion of my own.
 For scarce my life with fancy play'd
 Before I dream'd that pleasant
 dream —
 Still hither thither idly sway'd
 Like those long mosses in the
 stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
 The milldam rushing down with
 noise,
 And see the minnows everywhere
 In crystal eddies glance and poise,
 The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
 Below the range of stepping-stones,
 Or those three chestnuts near, that
 hung
 In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
 When after roving in the woods
 ('Twas April then), I came and sat
 Below the chestnuts, when their
 buds
 Were glistening to the breezy blue ;
 And on the slope, an absent fool,
 I cast me down, nor thought of you,
 But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
 An echo from a measured strain,
 Beat time to nothing in my head
 From some odd corner of the brain.
 It haunted me, the morning long,
 With weary sameness in the rhymes,
 The phantom of a silent song,
 That went and came a thousand
 times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
 I watch'd the little circles die ;
 They past into the level flood,
 And there a vision caught my eye ;
 The reflex of a beauteous form,
 A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
 As when a sunbeam wavers warm
 Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
 That morning, on the casement-edge
 A long green box of mignonette,
 And you were leaning from the
 ledge :
 And when I raised my eyes, above
 They met with two so full and
 bright —
 Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,
 That these have never lost their
 light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
 That I should die an early death :
 For love possess'd the atmosphere,
 And fill'd the breast with purer
 breath.
 My mother thought, What ails the
 boy ?
 For I was alter'd, and began
 To move about the house with joy,
 And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
 Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
 The sleepy pool above the dam,
 The pool beneath it never still,
 The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
 The dark round of the dripping
 wheel,
 The very air about the door
 Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
 When April nights began to blow,
 And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
 I saw the village lights below ;
 I knew your taper far away,
 And full at heart of trembling hope,
 From off the wold I came, and lay
 Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;

And "by that lamp," I thought,
"she sits!"

The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
"O that I were beside her now!

O will she answer if I call?
O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin:
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.

At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white
with may,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your check

Flush'd like the coming of the day;
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little one!

Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire:
She wish'd me happy, but she thought
I might have look'd a little higher;
And I was young—too young to wed:
"Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here," she said:
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not please.

I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see;

She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles in her ear:
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white,

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—
True love interprets—right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early rage
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in one,

Do make a garland for the heart :
So sing that other song I made,
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net
Can he pass, and we forget?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget:
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms intwine
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine!
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes forever dwell!
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss has brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee:
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds;

For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below:
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

O LOVE, Love, Love! O withering might!
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers:
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers:
I roll'd among the tender flowers:
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth;
I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
O Love, O fire! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly: from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire

Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce
delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye :
I will possess him or will die.

I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

GENONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart
the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from
pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either
hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges mid-
way down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below
them roars
The long brook falling thro' the
clev'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning: but
in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mourful Genone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the
hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round
her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in
rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined
with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-
shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the
upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the
hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :
The lizard, with his shadow on the
stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds
are dead.
The purple flower droops: the golden
bee
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of
love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes
are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills,
O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O
mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build
up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder
walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly
breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape: for it
may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper
woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-
dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain
pine :
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,
white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

" O mother Ida, hearken ere I die,
 Far-off the torrent call'd me from the
 cleft :
 Far up the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With
 down-dropt eyes
 I sat alone : white-breasted like a star
 Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leop-
 ard skin
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his
 sunny hair
 Cluster'd about his temples like a
 God's :
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-
 bow brightens
 When the wind blows the foam, and
 all my heart
 Went forth to embrace him coming
 ere he came.

" Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-
 white palm
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian
 gold,
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I
 look'd
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of
 speech
 Came down upon my heart.
 " My own Cænone,
 Beautiful-brow'd Cænone, my own soul,
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind
 ingrav'n
 " For the most fair," would seem to
 award it thine,
 As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
 Of movement, and the charm of mar-
 ried brows.'

" Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
 And added ' This was cast upon the
 board,
 When all the full-faced presence of
 the Gods
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; where-
 upon
 Rose feud, with question unto whom
 'twere due :

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-
 eve,
 Delivering, that to me, by common
 voice
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
 Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within
 the cave
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest
 pine,
 Mayst well behold them unheheld,
 unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of
 Gods.'

" Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnoon : one silvery
 cloud
 Had lost his way between the piney
 sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower
 they came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-
 swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like
 fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
 Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,
 And overhead the wandering ivy and
 vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild
 festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled
 boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower thro'
 and thro'.

" O mother Ida, hearken ere I die. . .
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud,
 and lean'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant
 dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to
 whom
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that
 grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the
 Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris
 made

Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestion'd overflowing revenue
 Wherewith to embellish state, 'from
 many a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed
 with corn,
 Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.
 Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax
 and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven
 large,
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing
 citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest
 towers.'

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake
 of power,
 'Which in all action is the end of all ;
 Power fitted to the season ; wisdom
 bred
 And throned of wisdom — from all
 neighbor crowns
 Alliance and Allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such
 boon from me,
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to
 thee king-born,
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-
 born,
 Should come most welcome, seeing
 men in power
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss
 In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 She censed, and Paris held the costly
 fruit
 Out at arm's-length, so much the
 thought of power
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where
 she stood
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared
 limbs
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed
 spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
 The while, above, her full and earnest
 eye

Over her snow-cold breast and angry
 cheek
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made
 reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge,
 self-control,
 These three alone lead life to sover-
 eign power.
 Yet not for power (power of herself
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live
 by law,
 Acting the law we live by without fear;
 And, because right is right, to follow
 right
 Were wisdom in the scorn of conse-
 quence.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Again she said : 'I woo thee not with
 gifts.

Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I
 am,
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
 If gazing on divinity disrobed
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of
 fair,
 Unbiass'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee
 sure
 That I shall love thee well and cleave
 to thee,
 So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a
 God's,

To push thee forward thro' a life of
 shocks,
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance
 grow
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown
 will,
 Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
 Commeasure perfect freedom.'

"Here she ceas'd,
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O
 Paris,
 Give it to Pallas !' but he heard me
 not,
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is
 me !

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodité beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in
Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward
drew
From her warm brows and bosom her
deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid
throat
And shoulder from the violets her
light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded
form
Between the shadows of the vine-
bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she
moved.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild
eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing
nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise
thee
The fairest and most loving wife in
Greece,'
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my
sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised
his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not
fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand
times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton
pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with play-
ful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most
loving is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that
my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot
lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-
falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn
rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.
"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest
pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the
craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all
between
The snowy peak and snow-white cata-
ract
Foster'd the callow eaglet — from be-
neath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the
dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while
I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Cænone see the morning
mist
Sweep thro' them; never see them
overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver
cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trem-
bling stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd
folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from
the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with
her
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair I'eleian banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the
board,
And bred this change; that I might
speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I
hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and
men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die,
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand
times,
In this green valley, under this green
hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this
stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with
tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to
these!
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see
my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear
my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-float-
ing cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this
earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to
live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of
life,
And shadow all my soul that I may
die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart
within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me
die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more
and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the
inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a
mother
Conjectures of the features of her
child
Ere it is born: her child! — a shudder
comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's
eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come
to me

Walking the cold and starless road of
Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise
and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars
come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she
says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I
know
That, whereso'er I am by night and
day,
All earth and air seem only burning
fire."

THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race:
She was the fairest in the face:
The wind is blowing in turret and
tree.
They were together, and she fell;
Therefore revenge became me well.
O the Earl was fair to see!

She died: she went to burning flame:
She mix'd her ancient blood with
shame.
The wind is howling in turret and
tree.
Whole weeks and months, and early
and late,
To win his love I lay in wait:
O the Earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bade him come;
I won his love, I brought him home.
The wind is roaring in turret and
tree.

And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head:
O the Earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest:
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
The wind is raging in turret and tree.
I hated him with the hate of hell.
But I loved his beauty passing well.
O the Earl was fair to see!

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,

As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern,
was there

Not less than truth design'd.

* * * *

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm.
Beneath branch-work of costly sardo-
nyx

Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St.
Cecily;

An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and
eyes

That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded
son

In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian
king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly
sail'd

A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew un-
clasp'd,

From off her shoulder backward
borne:

From one hand droop'd a crocus: one
hand grasp'd

The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy
thigh

Half-buried in the Eagle's down
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was
there,

Not less than life, design'd.

* * * *

Then in the towers I placed great bells
that swung,

Moved of themselves, with silver
sound;

And with choice paintings of wise men
I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph
strong,

Beside him Shakespeare bland and
mild;

And there the world-worn Dante
grasp'd his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the
rest;

A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his
breast,

From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-
set

Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every
land

So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden
slow,

Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads
and stings;

Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break
or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick
man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and those
great bells
Began to chime. She took her
throne:

She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' colored
flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Veru-
lam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their
motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of
change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were bla-
zon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange:

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,
emerald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples, and her eyes.
And from her lips, as morn from
Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd
song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feast-
ful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible
earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: "All these
are mine,

And let the world have peace or
wars,
"Tis one to me." She—when young
night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious
toils—

Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious
oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her
hands and cried,
"I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and
wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

"O all things fair to sate my various
eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me
well!

O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

"O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening
droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient
skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and
sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she
prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd
Fate;
And at the last she said:

"I take possession of man's mind and
deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.

I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

* * * *

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn
mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she threw and prosper'd: so
three years

She prosper'd: on the fourth she
fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in
his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she
turn'd her sight

The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, "Mene, mene," and divided
quite

The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her soli-
tude

Fell on her, from which mood was
born

Scorn of herself; again, from out that
mood

Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of
strength," she said,

"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones
were laid

Since my first memory ?".

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping
tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of
flame,

And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon
she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without
light
Or power of movement, seem'd my
soul,
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars
of sand,
Left on the shore; that hears all
night

The plunging seas draw backward
from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry
dance

Join'd not, but stood, and standing
saw

The hollow orb of moving Circum-
stance

Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had
curl'd.

"No voice," she shriek'd in that
lone hall,

"No voice breaks thro' the stillness
of this world:
One deep, deep silence all!"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's
mouldering sod,

Inwraught tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally.
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with
fears;
And ever worse with growing time,

And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt
round

With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully
sound

Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walk-
ing slow,

In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a
sound

Of rocks thrown down, or one deep
cry

Of great wild beasts; then thinketh,
"I have found
A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, "I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly fin-
ished,

She thre'v her royal robes away.
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she
said,

"Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers,
that are

So lightly beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others
there

When I have purged my guilt."

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,

Of me you shall not win renown:
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled

I saw the snare, and I retired:
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your
name,

Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I
came.

Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that dotes on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love;
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my
head.
Not thrice your branching limes have
blown
Since I beheld young Laurence
dead.

Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies:
A great enchantress you may be;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's
view,

She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of
you.

Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de
Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall.
The guilt of blood is at your door:
You changed a wholesome heart to
gall.

You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest
worth,

And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us
bent

The gardener Adam and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
"Tis only noble to be good.

Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman
blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
You pine among your halls and
towers :

The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless
wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks
as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands ?
Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear ;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year ;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day ;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine ;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline :
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break :
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree ?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be :
They say his heart is breaking, mother — what is that to me ?
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Ellie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen ;

For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May;
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,

Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now ;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go ;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place ;
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face ;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night forevermore,
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door ;
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green :
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never garden more :
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set
About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother : call me before the day is born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year !
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done !

But still I think it can't be long before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet:
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me — I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, "It's not for them: it's mine."
And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort her when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.
If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine —
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
 The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun —
 Forever and forever with those just souls and true —
 And what is life, that we should moan ? why make we such ado ?

Forever and forever, all in a blessed home —
 And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come —
 To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast —
 And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

"COURAGE!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
 "This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
 In the afternoon they came unto a land
 In which it seemed always afternoon.
 All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
 Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
 Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;
 And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
 Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.
 A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;
 And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
 They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
 From the inner land : far off, three mountain-tops,
 Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
 Stood sunset-flush'd ; and, dew'd with showery drops,
 Up-climb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.
 The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
 In the red West : thro' mountain clefts the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
 Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
 And meadow, set with slender galangale ;
 A land where all things always seem'd the same !
 And round about the keel with faces pale,
 Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.
 Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
 To each, but whoso did receive of them,
 And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
 Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
 On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
 His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;
 And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
 And music in his ears his beating heart did make.
 They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
 Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;
 And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
 Of child and wife, and slave ; but evermore

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, " We will return no more ;"
And all at once they sang, " Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG.

I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm:

Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
" There is no joy but calm!"
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath
no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward
the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death,
or dreamful ease.

v.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem
 Falling asleep in a half-dream !
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
 Eating the Lotos day by day,
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;
 To lend our hearts and spirit wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
 To muse and brood and live again in memory,
 With those old faces of our infancy
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in
 an urn of brass !

vi.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our wives
 And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change :
 For surely now our household hearths are cold :
 Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings,
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle ?
 Let what is broken so remain.
 The Gods are hard to reconcile :
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There is confusion worse than death,

Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labor unto aged breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

vii.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
 With half-dropt eyelid still,
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
 His waters from the purple hill —
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine —
 To watch the emerald-color'd water falling
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

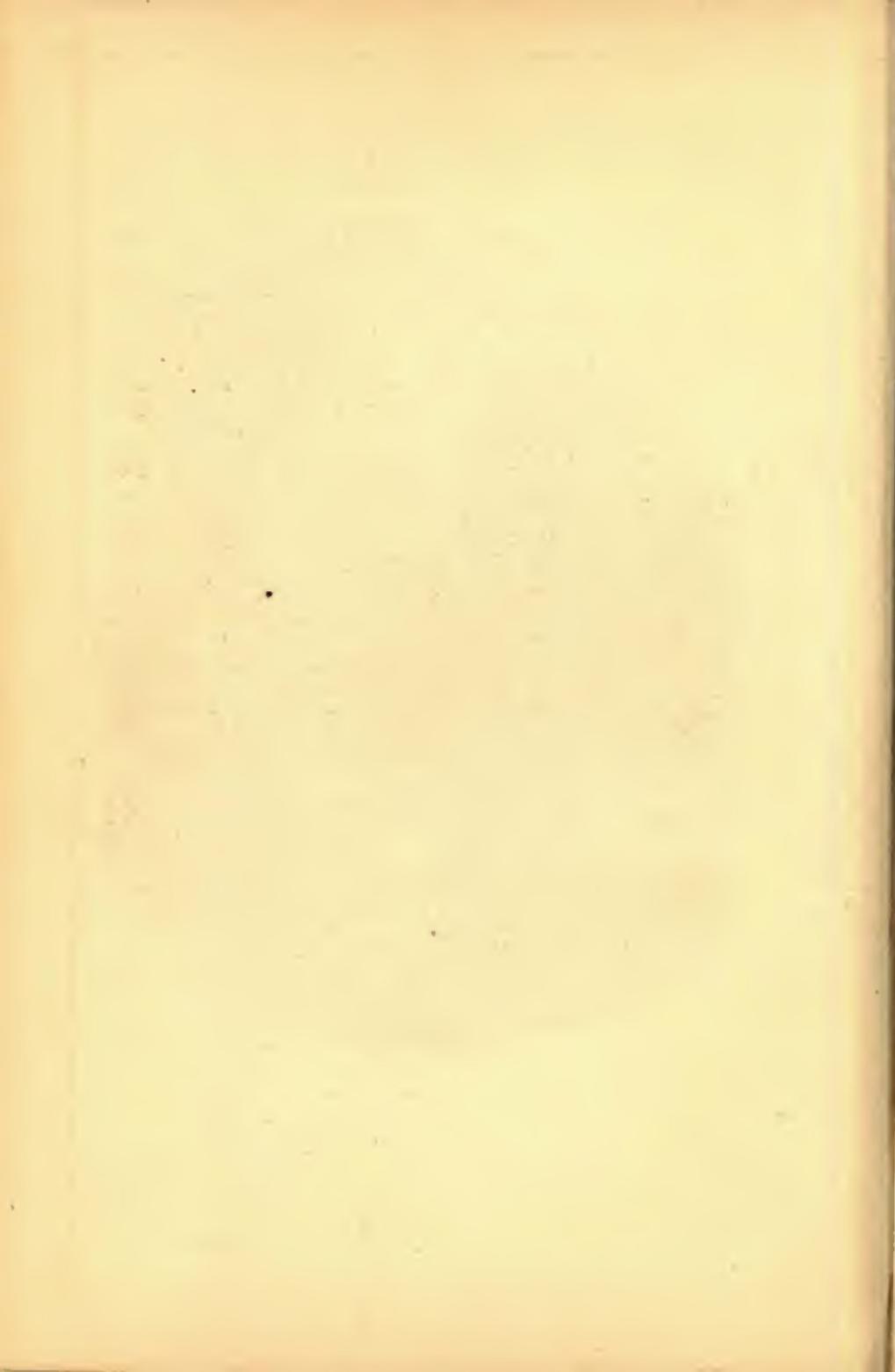
viii.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :
 The Lotos blows by every-winding creek :
 All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
 We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard when the surge was seething free,
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined



*"O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
more."*

THE LOTOS-EATERS.



On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
 For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
 Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
 Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world :
 Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
 But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong ;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil ;
 Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis whisper'd — down in hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar ;
 Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

Dan Chaneer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath Preluded those melodious bursts that fill The spacious times of great Elizabeth With sounds that echo still.
 And, for a while, the knowledge of his art Held me above the subject, as strong gales Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart, Brimful of those wild tales,
 Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land I saw, wherever light illumineth, Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand The downward slope to death.
 Those far-renowned brides of ancient song Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
 And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong, And trumpets blown for wars ;
 And clattering flints batter'd with clang ing hoofs ; And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries ; And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs Of marble palaces ;
 Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall Dislodging pinnacle and parapet Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ; Lances in ambush set ;
 And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ; White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts, And ever climbing higher

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
"The Legend of Good Women," long ago
 Sung by the morning-star of song, who made
 His music heard below ;

Squadrons and squares of men in
brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water,
divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with
iron grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as,
when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the
self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes seud along the
level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in
pain,
Resolved on noble things, and
strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along
the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew
down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd
town;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-
lapsing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges,
and did creep
Roll'd on each other, rounded,
smooth'd, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wan-
der'd far
In an old wood: fresh-wash'd in
coolest dew
The maiden splendors of the morning
star
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop
and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood under-
neath

Their broad curved branches, fledged
with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her
journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the
twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of
the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb
dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of
rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of
jasmine turn'd
Their humid arms festooning tree
to tree,
And at the root thro' lush green
grasses burn'd
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves,
I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid
dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks
drench'd in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the
green,
Pour'd back into my empty soul
and frame
The times when I remember to have
been
Joyful and free from blame,

And from within me a clear under-
tone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that un-
blissful clime,
"Pass freely thro': the wood is all
thine own,
Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stiller than chisell'd marble, stand-
ing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with
surprise
Froze my swift speech: she turning
on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal
eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

"I had great beauty: ask thou not
my name:
No one can be more wise than
destiny.
Many drew swords and died.
Where'er I came
I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair
field
Myself for such a face had boldly
died,"
I answer'd free; and turning I ap-
peal'd
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks
averse,
To her full height her stately stat-
ure draws;
"My youth," she said "was blasted
with a curse:
This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad
place,
Which men call'd Aulis in those
iron years:
My father held his hand upon his face;
I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to speak: my voice was
thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could
descrie
The stern black-bearded kings with
wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay
afloat;
The crowds, the temples, waver'd,
and the shore;
The bright death quiver'd at the vic-
tim's throat;
Touch'd; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward
brow:
"I would the white cold heavy-
plunging foam,
Whirr'd by the wind, had roll'd me
deep below,
Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the
silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping
sea:
Sudden I heard a voice that cried,
"Come here,
That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery
rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf un-
roll'd;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and
bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile,
began:
"I govern'd men by change, and
so I sway'd
All moods. 'Tis long since I have
seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the
blood
According to my humor ebb and
flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood:
That makes my only woe.

"Nay — yet it chafes me that I could
not bend
One will; nor tame and tutor with
mine eye

That dull cold-blooded Caesar,
Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony?

"The man, my lover, with whom I
rode sublime
On Fortune's neck: we sat as God
by God:
The Nilus would have risen before his
time
And flooded at our nod.

" We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,
and lit
Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus
O my life
In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

" And the wild kiss, when fresh from
war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my
arms,
Contented there to die!

" And there he died: and when I heard
my name
Sigh'd forth with life I would not
brook my fear
Of the other: with a worm I balk'd
his fame.
What else was left? look here!"

(With that she tore her robe apart,
and half
The polish'd argent of her breast to
sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with
a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.)

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier
found
Me lying dead, my crown about my
brows,
A name forever!—lying robed and
crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest
range
Struck by all passion, did fall down
and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all
change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for
delight:
Because with sudden motion from
the ground
She rais'd her piercing orbs, and fill'd
with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keen-
est darts;
As once they drew into two burning
rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty
hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I
heard
A noise of some one coming thro'
the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested
bird
That claps his wings at dawn.

" The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late
and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro'
the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

" The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with
beams divine:
All night the splinter'd crags that wall
the dell
With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sun-
shine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro'
the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd
and tied

To where he stands,—so stood I,
when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite;
A maiden pure; as when she went
along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with wel-
come light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : "Heaven heads
the count of crimes
With that wild oath." She render'd
answer high :
"Not so, nor once alone; a thousand
times
I would be born and die.

"Single I grew, like some green plant,
whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes
beneath
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower
to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

"My God, my land, my father — these
did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature
gave,
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord
of love
Down to a silent grave.

"And I went mourning, 'No fair
Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame
among
The Hebrew mothers' — emptied of
all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

"Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal
bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that
glow
Beneath the battled tower.

"The light white cloud swam over us.
Anon

We heard the lion roaring from his
den ;
We saw the large white stars rise one
by one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

"Saw God divide the night with flying
flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief
became
A solemn scorn of ills.

"When the next moon was roll'd into
the sky,
Strength came to me that equall'd
my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire !

"It comforts me in this one thought
to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's
will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I
fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

"Moreover it is written that my race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from
Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her
face
Glow'd as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips : she left me where
I stood :
"Glory to God," she sang, and past
afar,
Thredding the sombre boskage of the
wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans
his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing
suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

"Alas! alas!" a low voice, full of care,
Murmur'd beside me: "Turn and look on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be."

"Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!
O me, that I should ever see the light!
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:
To whom the Egyptian: "O, you tamely died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust
The dagger thro' her side."

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance
Her murderer's head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

A memory labors longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore

That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er
Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be exprest
By signs or groans or tears;
Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something well:
While all the neighbors shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and park:
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry:

Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when
young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute notes are changed to
coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing
While you sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are
new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily
sighing :
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.
Old year, you must not die ;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-
love,

And the New-year will take 'em away.
Old year, you must not go ;
So long as you have been with us
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die ;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my
friend,
And the New-year blithe and bold,
my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro :
The cricket chirps : the light burns
low :

'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :
What is it we can do for you ?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack ! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor,
my friend,
And a new face at the door, my
friend,
A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain,
blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on
most,
Those in whose laps our limbs
are nursed,

Fall into shadow, soonest lost :
Those we love first are taken first,

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us; but, when love is
grown
To ripeness, that on which it throwe
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !
In grief I am not all unlearn'd;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did
pass ;
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair
is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not
been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor haying wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust
I honor and his living worth :
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n
asleep.

Great Nature is more wise than I :
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the
brain,
I will not even preach to you,
" Weep, weeping dulls the inward
pain."

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her
will
Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, " God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind";

For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the
night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her
throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How should I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth ?
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :
Both are my friends, and my true
breast

Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would
make
Grief more. 'Twere better I
should cease
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in
peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons in-
crease,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or
strange.

Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of
change.

ON A MOURNER.

I.
NATURE, so far as in her lies,
Imitates God, and turns her face
To every land beneath the skies,

Counts nothing that she meets with
base,
But lives and loves in every place;

II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,
And makes the purple lilac ripe,
Steps from her airy hill, and greens
The swamp, where hums the drop-
ping snipe,

With moss and braided marish-pipe;

III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, "Beat quicker, for the time
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
Are pleasant, and the beech and
lime
Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine,
Teach that sick heart the stronger
choice,
Till all thy life one way incline
With one wide Will that closes thine.

V.

And when the zoning eve has died
Where yon dark valleys wind for-
lorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and
bride,
From out the borders of the morn,
With that fair child betwixt them
born.

VI.

And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tombing
sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling stars
Comes Faith from tracts no feet
have trod,
And Virtue, like a household god

VII.

Promising empire; such as those
Once heard at dead of night to greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that he
rose

With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends
or foes

A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens
down

From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive
thought

Hath time and space to work and
spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil
crime,
And individual freedom mute;

Tho' Power should make from land
to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden
sand —

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

Or old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet:
Above her shook the starry lights :
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fulness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down :
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown ;

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light
our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes !

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen,
friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray

From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years :
Cut Prejudice against the grain :
But gentle words are always gain :
Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pension, neither count on praise :
It grows to guerdon after-days :
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch :

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
Nor master'd by some modern term ;
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :
And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life, that, working strongly,
binds —
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interest of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school ;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapor, hard to mark ;
And round them sea and air are
dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head ;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall
close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and
guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like
Peace ;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and
word,

Certain, if knowledge bring the
sword,
That knowledge takes the sword
away —

Would love the gleams of good that
broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes :
And if some dreadful need should
rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one
stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead ;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor
wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782.

O thou, that sendest out the man
To rule by land and sea,
Strong mother of a Lion-line,
Be proud of those strong sons of thine
Who wrench'd their rights from
thee !

What wonder, if in noble heat
Those men thine arms withheld,
Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,
And in thy spirit with thee fought —
Who sprang from English blood !

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,
Lift up thy rocky face.
And shatter, when the storms are
black,
In many a streaming torrent back,
The seas that shock thy base !

Whatever harmonies of law
The growing world assume,
Thy work is thine — The single note
From that deep chord which Hampden
smote
Will vibrate to the doom.

THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He utter'd rhyme and reason,
"Here, take the goose, and keep you
warm,
It is a stormy season."

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose — 'twas no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the
pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbors;
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labors.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied;
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder:
But ah! the more the white goose laid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there;
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle:
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note!"
Then wax'd her anger stronger.
"Go, take the goose, and wring her
throat,
I will not bear it longer."

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the
cat;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with claimor.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather:

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning;
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning."

The wild wind rang from park and
plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder:

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger!"

ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS.

THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—

The game of forfeits done — the girls all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past away —

The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,

Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held a talk,
How all the old honor had from Christmas gone,

Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games

In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out

With cutting eights that day upon the pond,

Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,

I bump'd the ice into three several stars,

Fell in a doze; and half awake I heard

The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,

Now harping on the church-commissioners,

Now hawking at Geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down

Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, "at home was little left,

And none abroad: there was no anchor, none,
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand

On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."

"And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-bowl."

"Why yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way

At college: but another which you had,

I mean of verse (for so we held it then),

What came of that?" "You know," said Frank, "he burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books" —

And then to me demanding why?

"Oh, sir,

He thought that nothing new was said, or else

Something so said 'twas nothing — that a truth

Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:

God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.

It pleased me well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,

"Why take the style of those heroic times?

For nature brings not back the Mastodon,

Nor we those times; and why should any man

Remodel models? these twelve books of mine

Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
Mere chaff and draf^f, much better burnt." "But I,"
Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh
from this hearth
And have it: keep a thing, its use
will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a
horse
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd
my ears;
For I remember'd Everard's college
fame
When we were Freshmen: then at my
request
He brought it; and the poet little
urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes
and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle
roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter
sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by
man,
Had fallen in Lyonnness about their
Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound
was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his
knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the
field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren
land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was
full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all

The goodliest fellowship of famous
knights
Whereof this world holds record.
Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I
think that we
Shall nevermore, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly
deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the
halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I
made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come
again
To rule once more — but let what will
be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till
morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Ex-
calibur,
Which was my pride: for thou re-
memberest how
In those old days, one summer noon,
an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the
lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd
across
And took it, and have worn it like a
king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or
told
In aftertime, this also shall be known :
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle
mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly
bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:

"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave
thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded
man.
Yet I thy best will all perform at full,

Watch what I see, and lightly bring
thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine
he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of
tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of an-
cient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-
wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,
stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed
rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand
Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter
moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,
ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against
the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with dia-
mond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-
work
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as
he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift
mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it
seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the
marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission
which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the
reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the
crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint
and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and
thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as be-
seem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either
hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to
lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the
thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring
me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second
time
Across the ridge, and paced beside
the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in
thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the
hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased,
he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,
"And if indeed I cast the brand
away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy
note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the
earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes
of many men.
What good should follow this, if this
were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to
disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey them, if a king
demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what
he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty
breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were
this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.'

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.' So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!"

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye

That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldest betray me for the precious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,

I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
Plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,

Seen where the moving isles of winter shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur: But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.

Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him wheeling him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur,
breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear,

"Quick, quack!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves

And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake, And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold — and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the
springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous
curls—
That made his forehead like a rising
sun
High from the dais-throne—were
parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging
loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that
fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the
King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance
in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tourna-
ment,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-
vere,
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall
I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and
my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are
dead,
When every morning brought a noble
chance,
And every chance brought out a noble
knight.
Such times have been not since the
light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is
dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty
world;
And I, the last, go forth companion-
less,
And the days darken round me, and
the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds."
And slowly answered Arthur from
the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,

And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt
the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in
me?
I have lived my life, and that which I
have done
May He within Himself make pure!
but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face
again,
Pray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Where-
fore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.
For what are men better than sheep
or goats
That nourish a blind life within the
brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands
of prayer
Both for themselves and those who
call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every
way
Bound by gold chains about the feet
of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long
way
With these thou seest—if indeed I
go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a
doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it
lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with
orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with
summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar
and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her
death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes
the flood.
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir
Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the
hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge
of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died
away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light,
that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness,
flared and fell:
At which the Parson, sent to sleep
with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted
"Good!" but we
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which
he read—
Perhaps some modern touches here
and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of noth-
ingness—
Or else we loved the man, and prized
his work;
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud; as at that time
of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for
dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man
ill-used,
"There now—that's nothing!" drew
a little back,
And drove his heel into the smoul-
der'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the
flue:
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I
seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming
shores,
Point after point; till on to dawn,
when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of
day,
To me, methought, who waited with a
crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing for-
ward, bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentle-
man
Of stateliest port; and all the people
cried,
"Arthur is come again: he cannot
die."
Then those that stood upon the hills
behind
Repeated—"Come again, and thrice
as fair;"
And, further inland, voices echoed—
"Come
With all good things, and war shall
be no more."
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard
indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the
Christmas-morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER; OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the
day,
When I and Eustace from the city
went
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I
and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so com-
plete
Portion'd in halves between us, that
we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.
My Eustace might have sat for
Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad of
breast.
He, by some law that holds in love,
and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little;—
Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit—
oh, she
To me myself, for some three careless
moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart

Unto the shores of nothing! Know
you not
Such touches are but embassies of
love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he
found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted
her,
And said to me, she sitting with us
then,
"When will *you* paint like this?" and
I replied,
(My words were half in earnest, half
in jest,) "Tis not your work, but Love's.
Love, unperceived,
A more ideal Artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you,
made those eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that
hair
More black than ashbuds in the front
of March."
And Juliet answer'd laughing, "Go
and see
The Gardener's daughter: trust me,
after that,
You scarce can fail to match his mas-
terpiece."
And up we rose, and on the spur we
went.
Not wholly in the busy world, nor
quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I
love.
News from the humming city comes
to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage
bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves,
you hear
The windy clang of the minster
clock;
Although between it and the garden
lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow
broad stream,
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the
oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a
bridge

Crown'd with the minster-towers.
The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-
udder'd kine,
And all about the large lime feathers
low,
The lime a summer home of murmur-
ous wings.
In that still place she, hoarded in
herself,
Grew, seldom seen; not less among us
lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had
not heard
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter?
Where was he,
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in
grief,
That, having seen, forgot? The com-
mon mouth,
So gross to express delight, in praise
of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the
world.
And if I said that Fancy, led by
Love,
Would play with flying forms and
images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before
I look'd upon her, when I heard her
name
My heart was like a prophet to my
heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd
of hopes,
That sought to sow themselves like
winged seeds,
Born out of everything I heard and
saw,
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of
balm
To one that travels quickly, made the
air
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of
thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than
the dream
Dream'd by a happy man, when the
dark East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.
 And sure this orbit of the memory folds
 For ever in itself the day we went
 To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
 Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
 Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
 Drew downward; but all else of heaven was pure
 Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
 And May with me from head to heel.
 And now,
 As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were
 The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,
 (For those old Mays had thrice the life of these.)
 Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
 And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,
 Leaning his horns into the neighbor field,
 And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
 Came voices of the well-contented doves.
 The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
 But shook his song together as he near'd.
 His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
 The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
 The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
 The redbow whistled; and the nightingale
 Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.
 And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,
 "Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,
 These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?
 Or have they any sense of why they sing?
 And would they praise the heavens for what they have?"
 And I made answer, "Were there nothing else
 For which to praise the heavens but only love,
 That only love were cause enough for praise."
 Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,
 And on we went; but ere an hour had pass'd,
 We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North;
 Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
 To one green wicket in a privet hedge;
 This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
 Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;
 And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
 Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
 The garden stretches southward. In the midst
 A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
 The garden-glasses shone, and momently
 The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.
 "Eustace," I said, "this wonder keeps the house."
 He nodded, but a moment afterwards
 He cried, "Look! look!" Before he ceased I turn'd,
 And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.
 For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
 That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,
 And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
 Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
 Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,

The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odors on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.
Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.
Light pretexts drew me; sometimes a Dutch love
For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city rooms; or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm; and more and more
A word could bring the color to my cheek;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd;
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touch'd with some new grace
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep
"I will,"
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds: but I rose up
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd

The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.
There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of wan'ing lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west, Reveal'd their shining windows: from them clash'd
The bells; we listen'd; with the time we play'd,
We spoke of other things; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there.
Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering, "I am thine."
Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full
How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed

I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with
 sad eyes,
Holding the folded annals of my
 youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit
 brows went by,
And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, "Be wise: not easily for-
 given
Are those, who setting wide the doors
 that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the
 heart,
Let in the day." Here, then, my words
have end.
Yet might I tell of meetings, of fare-
wells—
Of that which came between, more
sweet than each,
In whispers, like the whispers of the
leaves
That tremble round a nightingale—
in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for ut-
terance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might
I not tell
Of difference, reconciliation, pledges
given,
And vows, where there was never need
of vows,
And kisses, where the heart on one
wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as
above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces
pale
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleet-
ing stars;
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-
lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-
shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering
rain
Night slid down one long stream of
sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.
But this whole hour your eyes have
been intent

On that veil'd picture — veil'd, for
what it holds
May not be dwelt on by the common
day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise-
thy soul;
Make thine heart ready with thine
eyes: the time
Is come to raise the veil.
Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my
youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine
age.

DORA.

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his
son,
And she his niece. He often look'd
at them,
And often thought, "I'll make them
man and wife,"
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd towards William; but the
youth, because
He had been always with her in the
house,
Thought not of Dora.
Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said,
 "My son:
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I
die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is
well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and
he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I
bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your
wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night
and day,

For many years." But William answer'd short;
 "I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
 I will not marry Dora." Then the old
 man
 Was wroth, and doubled up his hands,
 and said :
 "You will not, boy! you dare to an-
 swer thus!
 But in my time a father's word was
 law,
 And so it shall be now for me. Look
 to it;
 Consider, William: take a month to
 think,
 And let me have an answer to my
 wish;
 Or, by the Lord that made me, you
 shall pack,
 And never more darken my doors
 again."
 But William answer'd madly; bit his
 lips,
 And broke away. The more he look'd
 at her
 The less he liked her; and his ways
 were harsh;
 But Dora bore them meekly. Then
 before
 The month was out he left his father's
 house,
 And hired himself to work within the
 fields;
 And half in love, half spite, he woo'd
 and wed
 A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
 Then, when the bells were ringing,
 Allan call'd
 His niece and said: "My girl, I love
 you well;
 But if you speak with him that was
 my son,
 Or change a word with her he calls his
 wife,
 My home is none of yours. My will
 is law."
 And Dora promised, being meek. She
 thought,
 "It cannot be: my uncle's mind will
 change!"
 And days went on, and there was
 born a boy

To William; then distresses came on
 him;
 And day by day he pass'd his father's
 gate,
 Heart-broken, and his father help'd
 him not.
 But Dora stored what little she could
 save,
 And sent it them by stealth, nor did
 they know
 Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
 On William, and in harvest time he
 died.
 Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
 And look'd with tears upon her boy,
 and thought
 Hard things of Dora. Dora came and
 said :
 "I have obey'd my uncle until now,
 And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro'
 me
 This evil came on William at the first.
 But, Mary, for the sake of him that's
 gone,
 And for your sake, the woman that he
 chose,
 And for this orphan, I am come to
 you:
 You know there has not been for these
 five years
 So full a harvest: let me take the
 boy,
 And I will set him in my uncle's eye
 Among the wheat; that when his heart
 is glad
 Of the full harvest, he may see the
 boy,
 And bless him for the sake of him
 that's gone."
 And Dora took the child, and went
 her way
 Across the wheat, and sat upon a
 mound
 That was unsown, where many poppies
 grew.
 Far off the farmer came into the field
 And spied her not; for none of all his
 men
 Dare tell him Dora waited with the
 child;
 And Dora would have risen and gone
 to him,

But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: "Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, "This is William's child!"
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:
"Do with me as you will, but take the child,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"
And Allan said, "I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more."
So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
He says that he will never see me more."
Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back:
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us."
So the women kiss'd each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,

And clapt him on the hands and on
the cheeks,
Like one that loved him: and the lad
stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that
hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by
the fire.
Then they came in: but when the boy
beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her:
And Allan set him down, and Mary
said:
"O Father! — if you let me call
you so —
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I
come
For Dora: take her back; she loves
you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at
peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he
said,
He could not ever rue his marrying
me —
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir,
he said
That he was wrong to cross his father
thus:
'God bless him!' he said, 'and may
he never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!'
Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd — unhappy that I
am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for
you
Will make him hard, and he will learn
to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora
back,
And let all this be as it was before."
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the
room;
And all at once the old man burst in
sobs: —
"I have been to blame — to blame.
I have killed my son.
I have kill'd him — but I loved him
— my dear son.

May God forgive me! — I have been
to blame.
Kiss me, my children." Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him
many times.
And all the man was broken with re-
morse;
And all his love came back a hundred-
fold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er
William's child
Thinking of William.
So those four abode
Within one house together; and as
years
Went forward, Mary took another
mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her
death.
—
AUDLEY COURT.
"THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd,
and not a room
For love or money. Let us picnic
there
At Audley Court."
I spoke, while Audley feast
Humm'd like a hive all round the
narrow quay,
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the boat,
And breathing of the sea. "With all
my heart,"
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd
thro' the swarm,
And rounded by the stillness of the
beach
To where the bay runs up its latest
horn.
We left the dying ebb that faintly
lipp'd
The flat red granite; so by many a
sweep
Of meadow smooth from aftermath
we reach'd
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd
thro' all
The pillar'd dusk of sounding syc-
amores,

And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,
With all its casements bedded, and its walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and levet lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat
And talk'd old matters over; who was dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and how
The races went, and who would rent the hall:
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was
This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,
The four-field system, and the price of grain;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—
“ Oh! who would fight and march
and countermarch,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into some bloody trench
Where no one knows? but let me live my life.

“ Oh! who would cast and balance
at a desk,
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

“ Who'd serve the state? for if I
carved my name
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands;
The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.

“ Oh! who would love? I woo'd a woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea; but let me live my life.”

He sang his song, and I replied with mine:

I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir
Robert's pride,
His books—the more the pity, so I said—
Came to the hammer here in March—
and this—
I set the words, and added names I knew.

“ Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me;
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

“ Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;

Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

“ Sleep, breathing health and peace
upon her breast:

Sleep, breathing love and trust against
her lip:

I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.
“ I go, but I return: I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream
of me."

So sang we each to either, Francis
Hale,
The farmer's son, who lived across the
bay,
My friend; and I, that having where-
withal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life
A rolling stone of here and every-
where,
Did what I would; but ere the night
we rose
And saunter'd home beneath a moon,
that, just
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the
leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
The limit of the hills; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the gloomy
quay,
The town was hush'd beneath us;
lower down
The bay was oily calm; the harbor
buoy,
Sole star of phosphorescence in the
calm,
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at
heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL.

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh
the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hill-side was redder than a
fox.
Is yon plantation where this byway
joins
The turnpike?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come by?
James. The mail? At one o'clock.

John. What is it now?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see?
No, not the County Member's with
the vane:
Up higher with the yew-tree by it,
and half

A score of gables.

James. That? Sir Edward Head's:
But he's abroad: the place is to be
sold.

John. Oh, his. He was not broken.

James. No, sir, he,
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his
blood

That veil'd the world with jaundice,
hid his face
From all men, and commerced with
himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily
life —

That keeps us all in order more or
less —

And sick of home went overseas for
change.

John. And whither?

James. Nay, who knows? he's here
and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with
him,

As well as with his tenant, Jocky
Dawes.

John. What's that?

James. You saw the man — on Mon-
day, was it? —

There by the humpback'd willow;
half stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and
made a bridge;

And there he caught the younker
tickling trout —

Caught in flagrante — what's the Latin
word? —

Delicto: but his house, for so they
say,

Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that
shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt
at doors,

And rummaged like a rat: no servant
stay'd:

The farmer next packs up his beds
and chairs,

And all his household stuff; and with
his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the
tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails
him, "What!"

You're flitting!" "Yes, we're flitting," says the ghost
(For they had pack'd the thing among
the beds,) "Oh well," says he, "you flitting with
us too — Jack, turn the horses' heads and home
again."

John. He left his wife behind; for
so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met my
lady once:
A woman like a butt, and harsh as
crabs.

John. Oh yet but I remember, ten
years back —

"Tis now at least ten years — and then
she was —

You could not light upon a sweeter
thing:

A body slight and round, and like a
pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a
foot

Lessening in perfect cadence, and a
skin

As clean and white as privet when it
flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades,
and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat
and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt
shame and pride,

New things and old, himself and her,
she sour'd

To what she is: a nature never
kind!

Like men, like manners: like breeds
like, they say:

Kind nature is the best: those man-
ners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand;
Which are indeed the manners of the
great.

John. But I had heard it was this
bill that past,
And fear of change at home, that
drove him hence.

James. That was the last drop in
the cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff
brought

A Chartist pike. You should have
seen him wince
As from a venomous thing: he thought
himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a
cry

Should break his sleep by night, and
his nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody
thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs, but, sir,
you know

That these two parties still divide the
world —

Of those that want, and those that
have: and still

The same old sore breaks out from
age to age

With much the same result. Now I
myself,

A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I
would.

I was at school — a college in the
South:

There lived a flayflint near; we stole
his fruit,

His hens, his eggs; but there was law
for us;

We paid in person. He had a sow,
sir. She,

With meditative grunts of much con-
tent,

Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun
and mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the col-
lege tower

From her warm bed, and up the cork-
screw stair

With hand and rope we haled the
groaning sow,

And on the leads we kept her till she
pigg'd.

Large range of prospect had the
mother sow,

And but for daily loss of one she loved
As one by one we took them — but for
this —

As never sow was higher in this
world —

Might have been happy : but what lot
is pure ?
We took them all, till she was left
alone

Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her
sty.

John. They found you out ?
James. Not they.

John. Well — after all —
What know we of the secret of a
man ?

His nerves were wrong. What ails
us, who are sound,
That we should mimic this raw fool
the world,
Which charts us all in its coarse
blacks or whites,
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To Pity — more from ignorance than
will.

But put your best foot forward, or
I fear
That we shall miss the mail : and here
it comes
With five at top : as quaint a four-in-
hand
As you shall see — three pyebalds and
a roan.

EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE.

OME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters
of a year,
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :
See here, my doing : curves of moun-
tain, bridge,
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon a
rock
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :
And here, new-comers in an ancient
hold,
New-comers from the Mersey, million-
aires,
Here lived the Hills — a Tudor-chim-
nied bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of
bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the
lake
With Edwin Morris and with Edward
Bull
The curate ; he was fatter than his
cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the
names,
Long learned names of agaric, moss
and fern,
Who forged a thousand theories of the
rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to row,
to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,
His own — I call'd him Crichton, for
he seem'd
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early
life,
And his first passion ; and he answer'd
me ;
And well his words became him : was
he not
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he
spoke.

" My love for Nature is as old as I ;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to
that,
And three rich sennights more, my love
for her.
My love for Nature and my love for
her,
Of different ages, like twin-sisters
grew,
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the
sun,
And some full music seem'd to move
and change
With all the varied changes of the
dark,
And either twilight and the day be-
tween ;
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again

Revolving toward fulfilment, made it
sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to
breathe."

Or this or something like to this he
spoke.
Then said the fat-faced curate Edward
Bull,
" I take it, God made the woman for
the man,
And for the good and increase of the
world.
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims us
up,
And keeps us tight ; but these unreal
ways
Seem but the theme of writers, and
indeed
Worn threadbare. Man is made of
solid stuff.
I say, God made the woman for the
man,
And for the good and increase of the
world."

" Parson," said I, " you pitch the pipe
too low :
But I have sudden touches, and can
run
My faith beyond my practice into his :
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce have other music : yet say on.
What should one give to light on such
a dream ? "
I ask'd him half-sardonically.

" Give ?
Give all thou art," he answer'd, and a
light
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy
cheek ;
" I would have hid her needle in my
heart,
To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin : my ears
could hear
Her lightest breath ; her least remark
was worth
The experience of the wise. I went
and came ;

Her voice fled always thro' the summer
land ;
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy
days !
The flower of each, those moments
when we met,
The crown of all, we met to part no
more."

Were not his words delicious, I a
beast
To take them as I did ? but something
jarr'd ;
Whether he spoke too largely ; that
there seem'd
A touch of something false, some self-
conceit,
Or over-smoothness : howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humor, and I said :

" Friend Edwin, do not think your-
self alone
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to
me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right
and left ?
But you can talk : yours is a kindly
vein :
I have, I think, — Heaven knows — as
much within ;
Have, or should have, but for a
thought or two,
That like a purple beech among the
greens
Looks out of place : 'tis from no want
in her :
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern
mind
Dissecting passion. Time will set me
right."

So spoke I knowing not the things
that were.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward
Bull :
" God made the woman for the use of
man,
And for the good and increase of the
world."

And I and Edwin laughed; and now
we paused
About the windings of the marge to
hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy
holms
And alders, garden-isles; and now we
left
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows of the lisping lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the
sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on
their crags,
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by
him
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.
'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no
more:
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous
suit*,
The close, "Your Letty, only yours";
and this
Thrice underscored. The friendly
mist of morn
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with
beating heart
The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelv-
ing keel;
And out I stept, and up I crept: she
moved,
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering
flowers:
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice;
and she,
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore
faith, I breathed
In some new planet: a silent cousin
stole
Upon us and departed: "Leave," she
cried,
"O leave me!" "Never, dearest,
never: here
I brave the worst;" and while we
stood like fools
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
And poodles yell'd within, and out
they came
Trustees and Aunts and Uncles.

"What, with him!
Go" (shril'd the cotton-spinning
chorus); "him!"
I choked. Again they shriek'd the
burthen—"Him!"
Again with hands of wild rejection
"Go!—
Girl, get you in!" She went—and in
one month
They wedded her to sixty thousand
pounds,
To lands in Kent and messuages in
York,
And slight Sir Robert with his watery
smile
And educated whisker. But for me,
They set an ancient creditor to
work:
It seems I broke a close with force
and arms:
There came a mystic token from the
king
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!
I read, and fled by night, and flying
turn'd:
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake be-
low:
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to
the storm;
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have
seen
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared
to hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps: yet
long ago
I have pardon'd little Letty; not in-
deed,
It may be, for her own dear sake but
this;
She seems a part of those fresh days
to me;
For in the dust and drouth of Lon-
don life
She moves among my visions of the
lake,
While the prime swallow dips his
wing, or then
While the gold-lily blows, and over-
head
The light cloud smoulders on the
summer crag.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and
crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven,
scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blas-
phemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I
hold
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn
and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with
storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my
sin.
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty
God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten
years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman
pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and
cold,
In coughs, aches, stiches, ulcerous
throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the
cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp,
and sleet, and snow;
And I had hoped that ere this period
closed
Thou wouldest have caught me up into
thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten
limbs
The need of saints, the white robe
and the palm.
O take the meaning, Lord: I do not
breathe,
Not whisper, any murmur of com-
plaint.
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this,
were still
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to
bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin,
that crush'd
My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,

Thou knowest I bore this better at
the first,
For I was strong and bale of body
then;
And tho' my teeth, which now are
dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all
my beard
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the
moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl
with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and
sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I
sang.
Now am I feeble grown; my end
draws nigh;
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf
I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people
hum
About the column's base, and almost
blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I
know;
And both my thighs are rotted with
the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamor and to
cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my
weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from
the stone,
Have mercy, mercy: take away my
sin.
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my
soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be
saved?
Who may be made a saint, if I fail
here?
Show me the man hath suffer'd more
than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one
death?
For either they were stoned, or cruci-
fied,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or
sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die
here

To-day, and whole years long, a life
of death
Bear witness, if I could have found a
way
(And heedfully I sifted all my
thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this
home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and
hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.
For not alone this pillar-punish-
ment,
Not this alone I bore: but while I
lived
In the white convent down the valley
there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The robe that haled the buckets from
the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the
noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that
all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More
than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest
all.
Three winters, that my soul might
grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain
side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I
lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged
stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering
mist, and twice
Black'd with thy branding thunder,
and sometimes
Sucking the damps for drink, and
eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those
that came
To touch my body and be heal'd, and
live:
And they say then that I work'd mir-
acles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst
mankind,

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers.
Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.
Then, that I might be more alone
with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar,
high
Six cubits, and three years on one of
twelve;
And twice three years I crouch'd on
one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I
grew
Twice ten long weary weary years to
this,
That numbers forty cubits from the
soil.
I think that I have borne as much
as this—
Or else I dream—and for so long a
time,
If I may measure time by yon slow
light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow
crows—
So much—even so.
And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and
say,
“Fall down, O Simeon: that hast
suffer'd long
For ages and for ages!” then they
prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I
fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind
lethargies
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time
are choked.
But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and
all the saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men
on earth
House in the shade of comfortable
roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-
some food,
And wear warm clothes, and even
beasts have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of
the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the
saints ;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am
wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with
crackling frost.
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my
back ;
A grazing iron collar grinds my
neck ;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the
cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till
I die :
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.
O Lord, thou knowest what a man
I am ;
A sinful man, conceived and born in
sin :
'Tis their own doing; this is none of
mine ;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for
this,
That here come those that worship
me ? Ha ! ha !
They think that I am somewhat.
What am I ?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and
flowers :
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness
here)
Have all in all endured as much, and
more
Than many just and holy men, whose
names
Are register'd and calendar'd for
saints.
Good people, you do ill to kneel to
me.
What is it I can have done to merit
this ?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some mira-
cles,
And cured some halt and maim'd ; but
what of that ?

It may be, no one, even among the
saints,
May match his pains with mine ; but
what of that ?
Yet do not rise ; for you may look on
me,
And in your looking you may kneel
to God.
Speak ! is there any of you halt or
maim'd ?
I think you know I have some power
with Heaven
From my long penance : let him speak
his wish.
Yes, I can heal him. Power goes
forth from me.
They say that they are heal'd. Ah,
hark ! they shout
"St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved ?
This is not told of any. They were
saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,
"Behold a saint!"
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrys-
alis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope
ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that
God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful
record all
My mortal archives.
O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end ;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine
bakes ;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours
become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here
proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals
I lay,
A vessel full of sin ; all hell beneath

Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd
my sleeve,
Abaddon and Asmodæus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they
swarm'd again.
In bed like monstrous apes they
crush'd my chest;
They flapp'd my light out as I read: I
saw
Their faces grow between me and my
book;
With colt-like whinny and with hog-
gish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way
was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them.
Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges
and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it
may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly,
with slow steps,
With slow, faint steps, and much
exceeding pain,
Have scrambled past those pits of fire,
that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me
the praise:
God only through his bounty hath
thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this
world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do
not say
But that a time may come — yea, even
now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the
threshold stairs
Of life — I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without
reproach;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about
my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my
bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious
saints.
While I spake then, a sting of
shrewdest pain

Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloud-
like change,
In passing, with a grosser film made
thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end!
the end!
Surely the end! What's here? a
shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel
there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed
brother, come.
I know thy glittering face. I waited
long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it
now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I
clutch it. Christ!
'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown!
the crown!
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm,
and frankincense.
Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints:
I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet
for Heaven.
Speak, if there be a priest, a man
of God,
Among you there, and let him pres-
ently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the
shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.
But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them
take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy
light.

THE TALKING OAK.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;
Once more before my face
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that, which in me burn'd,
The love, that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarized a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven
None else could understand;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
Twere well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

"O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year
Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

"Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

"Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And number'd bead, and shrift,

Bluff Harry broke into the spence
And turn'd the cowls adrift:

" And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

" And all that from the town would
stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork :

" The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays :

" And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

" And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

" I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

" For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

" From when she gamboll'd on the
greens
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

" I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
(And bear me with thine ears,)
That, tho' I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

" Yet, since I first could cast a shade.
Did never creature pass

So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass :

"For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace ;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft has heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

"O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town ;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

"And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy :
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

"An hour had past — and, sitting
straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

"But as for her, she stay'd at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come,
She look'd with discontent.

"She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf ;
She left the new piano shut :
She could not please herself.

"Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

"A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child :

"But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and
rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

"And here she came, and round me
play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my 'giant bole ;'

"And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist :
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

"I wish'd myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

"Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as
sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold."

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace !
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

"O yes, she wander'd round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she
found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

"A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

"Then flush'd her cheek with rosy
light,
She glanced across the plain ;

But not a creature was in sight:
She kiss'd me once again.

"Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd:

"And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.

"Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm —
The cushions of whose touch may
press
The maiden's tender palm.

"I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust:

"For ah! my friend, the days were
brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the
leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

"But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

"She had not found me so remiss;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto."

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

"Tis little more: the day was warm;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
And at my feet she lay.

"Her eyelids dropp'd their silken
eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

"I took the swarming sound of life —
The music from the town —
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lull'd them in my own.

"Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

"A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine,

"Then close and dark my arms I
spread,
And shadow'd all her rest —
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

"But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

"And yet it was a graceful gift —
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

"I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

"O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Summer-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top
All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow —
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee
blow
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may
full,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England's honors that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY.

Or love that never found his earthly
close,
What sequel? Streaming eyes and
breaking hearts?
Or all the same as if he had not been?
Not so. Shall Error in the round
of time
Still father Truth? O shall the brag-
gart shout
For some blind glimpse of freedom
work itself
Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to
law
System and empire? Sin itself be
found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the
Sun?
And only he, this wonder, dead, be-
come
Mere highway dust? or year by year
alone
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of
himself?
If this were thus, if this, indeed,
were all,
Better the narrow brain, the stony
heart,

The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,
The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?
O three times less unworthy! likewise thou
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy years
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.
Will some one say, Then why not ill for good?
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man
My work shall answer, since I knew the right
And did it; for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a man.
—So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,
When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears would dwell
One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
Then not to dare to see! when thy low voice,
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,
And on thy bosom (deep desired relief!)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd

Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!
For Love himself took part against himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—
O this world's curse,—beloved but hated — came
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,
And crying, "Who is this? behold thy bride,"
She push'd me from thee.
If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:
Hard is my doom and thine: thou knowest it all.
Could Love part thus? was it not well to speak,
To have spoken once? It could not but be well.
The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil, brought the night
In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears
As flow but once a life.
The trance gave way
To those caresses, when a hundred times
In that last kiss, which never was the last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth;
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
In that brief night; the summer night, that paused

Among her stars to hear us; stars
that hung
Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels
of Time
Spun round in station, but the end
had come.
O then like those, who clench their
nerves to rush
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There — closing like an individual
life —
In one blind cry of passion and of
pain,
Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
Caught up the whole of love and
utter'd it,
And bade adieu for ever.
Live — yet live —
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, know-
ing all
Life needs for life is possible to
will —
Live happy; tend thy flowers; be
tended by
My blessing! Should my Shadow
cross thy thoughts
Too sadly for their peace, remand it
thou
For calmer hours to Memory's dark-
est hold,
If not to be forgotten — not at
once —
Not all forgotten. Should it cross
thy dreams,
O might it come like one that looks
content,
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the
truth,
And point thee forward to a distant
light,
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy
heart
And leave thee freer, till thou wake
refresh'd
Then when the first low matin-chirp
hath grown
Full quire, and morning driv'n her
plow of pearl
Far furrowing into light the mounded
rake,
Beyond the fair green field and east-
ern sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which
Leonard wrote:
It was last summer on a tour in Wales:
Old James was with me: we that day
had been
Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leon-
ard there,
And found him in Llanberis: then we
crost
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half
way up
The counter side; and that same song
of his
He told me; for I banter'd him, and
swore
They said he lived shut up within
himself,
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous
days,
That, setting the *how much* before the
how,
Cry, like the daughters of the horse-
leech, "Give,
Cram us with all," but count not me
the herd!
To which "They call me what they
will," he said:
"But I was born too late: the fair new
forms,
That float about the threshold of an
age,
Like truths of Science waiting to be
caught —
Catch me who can, and make the
catcher crown'd —
Are taken by the forelock, Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen,
hear
These measured words, my work of
yestermorn.
"We sleep and wake and sleep, but
all things move;
The Sun flies forward to his brother
Sun;
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her
ellipse;
And human things returning on them-
selves
Move onward, leading up the golden
year.

"Ah, tho' the times, when some new thought can bud,
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

"When wealth no more shall rest
in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt

In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man
Thro' all the season of the golden year.

"Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens
be wrens?
If all the world were falcons, what of that?

The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

"Fly, happy happy sails, and bear
the Press;
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;

Knit land to land, and blowing havenward
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear
of toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

"But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace

Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,

Thro' all the circle of the golden year?"

Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon

"Ah, folly!" in mimic cadence answer'd James—

"Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time; nor in our children's time,

"Tis like the second world to us that live;

"Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven

As on this vision of the golden year." With that he struck his staff against the rocks

And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full Of force and choleric, and firm upon his feet,

And like an oaken stock in winter woods,

O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis: Then added, all in heat :

"What stuff is this!
Old writers push'd the happy season back,—

The more fools they,—we forward:
dreamers both:

You most, that in an age, when every hour

Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,

Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge

His hand into the bag: but well I know

That unto him who works, and feels he works,

This same grand year is ever at the doors."

He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
And buffet round the hills, from bluff to bluff.

ULYSSES.

Ir little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
 Life to the lees: all times I have en-
 joy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both
 with those
 That loved me, and alone; on shore,
 and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
 Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
 For always roaming with a hungry
 heart
 Much have I seen and known; cities
 of men
 And manners, climates, councils, gov-
 ernments,
 Myself not least, but honor'd of them
 all;
 And drunk delight of battle with my
 peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy
 Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch where-
 thro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose
 margin fades
 For ever and for ever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in
 use!
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life
 piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me
 Little remains: but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something
 more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it
 were
 For some three suns to store and hoard
 myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge like a sinking
 star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human
 thought.
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the
 isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labor, by slow prudence to make
 mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the
 good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the
 sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work,
 I mine.
 There lies the port; the vessel puffs
 her sail:
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My
 mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought,
 and thought with me—
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and
 opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads — you and
 I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
 Death closes all: but something ere
 the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be
 done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with
 Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the
 rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon
 climbs: the deep
 Moans round with many voices.
 Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order
 smite
 The sounding furrows; for my pur-
 pose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the
 baths
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us
 down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy
 Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we
 knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and
 tho'
 We are not now that strength which
 in old days

Moved earth and heaven; that which
we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but
strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
yield.

TITHONUS.

THE woods decay, the woods decay
and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the
ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies
beneath,
And after many a summer dies the
swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine
arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a
dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls
of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a
man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy
choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he
seem'd
To his great heart none other than a
God!
I ask'd thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking
with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how
they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant
work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and
wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left
me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal
youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy
love,

Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even
now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy
guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that
fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back
thy gift:

Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most
meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart;
there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where
I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glim-
mer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy
shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart re-
new'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the
gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close
to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the
wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy
yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their
loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of
fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beauti-
ful
In silence, then before thine answer
given
Departest, and thy tears are on my
cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with
thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying
learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be
true?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall
their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
 In days far-off, and with what other eyes
 I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
 The lucid outline forming round thee;
SAW
 The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
 Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
 Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
 Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
 Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
 With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
 Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
 Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
 Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
 While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
 How can my nature longer mix with thine?
 Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold.
 Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
 Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
 Of happy men that have the power to die,
 And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
 Release me, and restore me to the ground;
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
 I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
 And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
 Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
 Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
 Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
 Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
 With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land repos'd;
 When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove ;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd — her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs —
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes —

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong";
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin ?" weeping, "I have loved thee long."

X Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands ;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

X Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might ;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copsis ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ? — having known me — to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine !

X Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

X As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought:
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand —
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well — 'tis well that I should bluster! — Hadst thou less unworthy
proved —
Would to God — for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clangling rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she speak and move:
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No — she never loved me truly: love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.
"Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings — she herself was not
exempt —
Truly, she herself had suffer'd" — Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from thy deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new :
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do :

{ For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm ;

{ Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

{ There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye ;

Eye to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint :
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

{ Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's ?

{ Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string ?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's pleasure, woman's pain —
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd ;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree —
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing
space ;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I know my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun or clime ?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time —

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day :
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun :
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall !
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow ;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;
I hung with grooms and porters on the
bridge,
To watch the three tall spires ; and there
I shaped*

The city's ancient legend into this : —

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that
prate

Of rights and wrongs, have loved the
people well,
And loathed to see them over-tax'd ;
but she
Did more, and underwent, and over-
came,

The woman of a thousand summers
back,

Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who
ruled

In Coventry : for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers
brought

Their children, clamoring, " If we pay,
we starve ! "

She sought her lord, and found him,
where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his
hair

A yard behind. She told him of their
tears,

And pray'd him, " If they pay this tax,
they starve."

Whereat he stared, replying, half-
amazed,

" You would not let your little finger
ache

For such as *these* ? — " But I would
die," said she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by
Paul :

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her
ear ;

" Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk ! " — " Alas ! " —
she said,

" But prove me what it is I would not
do."

And from a heart as rough as Esau's
hand,

He answer'd, " Ride you naked thro'
the town,

And I repeal it "; and nodding, as in
scorn,

He parted, with great strides among
his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her
mind,

As winds from all the compass shift
and blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of
trumpet, all

The hard condition ; but that she
would loose

The people : therefore, as they loved her well,
 From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
 No eye look down, she passing ; but that all
 Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.
 Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
 Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,
 The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath
 She linger'd, looking like a summer moon
 Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,
 And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee ;
 Unelad herself in haste ; adown the stair
 Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
 From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd
 The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt
 In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.
 Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :
 The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
 And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
 The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout
 Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur
 Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot
 Like horrors thro' her pulses : the blind walls
 Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead
 Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she
 Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
 The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.
 Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity :
 And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
 The fatal byword of all years to come, Boring a little anger-hole in fear,
 Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had their will,
 Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
 And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
 On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;
 And she, that knew not, pass'd : and all at once,
 With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
 Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,
 One after one : but even then she gain'd
 Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,
 To meet her lord, she took the tax away
 And built herself an everlasting name.

THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak : A pleasant hour has passed away While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
 The dewy sister-eyelids lay. As by the lattice you reclined,
 I went thro' many wayward moods To see you dreaming — and, behind, A summer crisp with shining woods. And I too dream'd, until at last Across my fancy, brooding warm, The reflex of a legend past, And loosely settled into form. And would you have the thought I had,
 And see the vision that I saw, Then take the broidery-frame, and add A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest
eye—
The rhymes are dazzled from their
place,
And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

I.

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy
plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows
come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their
eggs:
In these, in those the life is stay'd.
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the
wall.

IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd; and
there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honor blooming fair;
The page has caught her hand in his:
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:

His own are pouted to a kiss:
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble
wine.

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as
blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, burr and brake and
brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace spire.

VII.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of
men?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and
Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has
grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of
pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl-

II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould
 Languidly ever; and, amid
 Her full black ringlets downward
 roll'd,
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
 With bracelets of the diamond
 bright:
 Her constant beauty doth inform
 Stillness with love, and day with
 light.

III.

She sleeps: her breathings are not
 heard
 In palace chambers far apart.
 The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
 That lie upon her charmed heart.
 She sleeps: on either hand upswells
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly
 prest:
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL.

I.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
 To those that seek them issue forth;
 For love in sequel works with fate,
 And draws the veil from hidden
 worth.
 He travels far from other skies—
 His mantle glitters on the rocks—
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

II.

The bodies and the bones of those
 That strove in other days to pass,
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
 He gazes on the silent dead:
 “They perish'd in their daring
 deeds.”
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,
 “The many fail: the one succeeds.”

III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he
 seeks:
 He breaks the hedge: he enters
 there:
 The color flies into his cheeks:
 He trusts to light on something fair;
 For all his life the charm did talk
 About his path, and hover near
 With words of promise in his walk,
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV.

More close and close his footsteps
 wind:
 The Magic Music in his heart
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find
 The quiet chamber far apart.
 The spirit flutters like a lark,
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his
 knee.
 “Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
 How dark those hidden eyes must
 be!”

THE REVIVAL.

I.

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
 And barking dogs, and crowing
 cocks;
 A fuller light illumined all,
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
 The butler drank, the steward
 scrawl'd,
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock
 squall'd,
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and
 clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III.

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and
spoke,
"By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
"Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV.

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?"
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return'd reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE.

I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond this utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

II.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss;"
"O wake for ever, love," she hears,
"O love, 'twas such as this and this."
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

III.

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep!"
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled!"
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"
"O love, thy kiss would wake the
dead!"
And o'er them many a flowing range

Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

IV.

"A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me
where?"
"O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders
there."
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL.

I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair.
Oh, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed flower that simply
blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?

II.

But any man that walks the mead,
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
According as his humors lead,
A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOL.

I.

YOU shake your head. A random
string
Your finer female sense offends.
Well — were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends;
To pass with all our social ties
To silence from the paths of men;
And every hundred years to rise

And learn the world, and sleep again;
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
 And wake on science grown to more,
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,
 As wild as aught of fairy lore;
 And all that else the years will show,
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
 The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the Powers;
 Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes;
 For we are Ancients of the earth,
 And in the morning of the times.

II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
 Thro' sunny decades new and strange,
 Or gay quinquennials would we reap
 The flower and quintessence of change.

III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!
 So much your eyes my fancy take—
 Be still the first to leap to light
 That I might kiss those eyes awake!
 For, am I right, or am I wrong,
 To choose your own you did not care;
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,
 And I will take my pleasure there:
 And, am I right or am I wrong,
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
 To search a meaning for the song,
 Perforce will still revert to you;
 Nor finds a closer truth than this
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
 And evermore a costly kiss
 The prelude to some brighter world.

IV.

For since the time when Adam first
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
 And every bird of Eden burst
 In carol, every bud to flower,
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd
 hopes,
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly
 join'd?
 Where on the double rosebud droops
 The fulness of the pensive mind;

Which all too dearly self-involved,
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,
 That lets thee neither hear nor see:
 But break it. In the name of wife,
 And in the rights that name may give,
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
 And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And, if you find a meaning there,
 O whisper to your glass, and say,
 "What wonder, if he thinks me fair?"
 What wonder I was all unwise,
 To shape the song for your delight
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light?
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,
 And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,
 But it is wild and barren,
 A garden too with scarce a tree,
 And waster than a warren:
 Yet say the neighbors when they call,
 It is not bad but good land,
 And in it is the germ of all
 That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
 In days of old Amphion,
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
 Nor cared for seed or scion!
 And had I lived when song was great,
 And legs of trees were limber,
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
 And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
 Such happy intonation,
 Wherever he sat down and sung
 He left a small plantation;

Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
Coqueting with young beeches;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little coves climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,
And down the-middle, buzz! she went
With all her bees behind her:
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the
grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree:
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended;
And shepherds from the mountain-
caves
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-
frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves—
The random sunshine lighten'd!

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure;
So youthful and so flexible then,
You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle! shake the
twigs!

And make her dance attendance;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

"Tis vain! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading;
O Lord!—'tis in my neighbor's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro'
there,
And Methods of transplanting trees
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbors clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation.
I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom:
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapor goes :
 May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
 That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
 As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and
 dark,
 To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
 To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
 My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
 To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
 The flashes come and go ;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
 And strews her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
 Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom
 waits,
 To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
 One sabbath deep and wide —
A light upon the shining sea —
 The Bridegroom with his bride !

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of
 men,
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
 Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,

The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and
 fly,

The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they roll in clangling lists,
 And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
 On whom their favors fall !
For them I battle till the end,
 To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
 My knees are bow'd in crypt and
 shrine :
I never felt the kiss of love,
 Nor maiden's hand is mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
 Me mightier transports move and
 thrill ;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
 A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
 A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
 I hear a noise of hymns :
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
 I hear a voice but none are there ;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
 And solemn chants resound between.

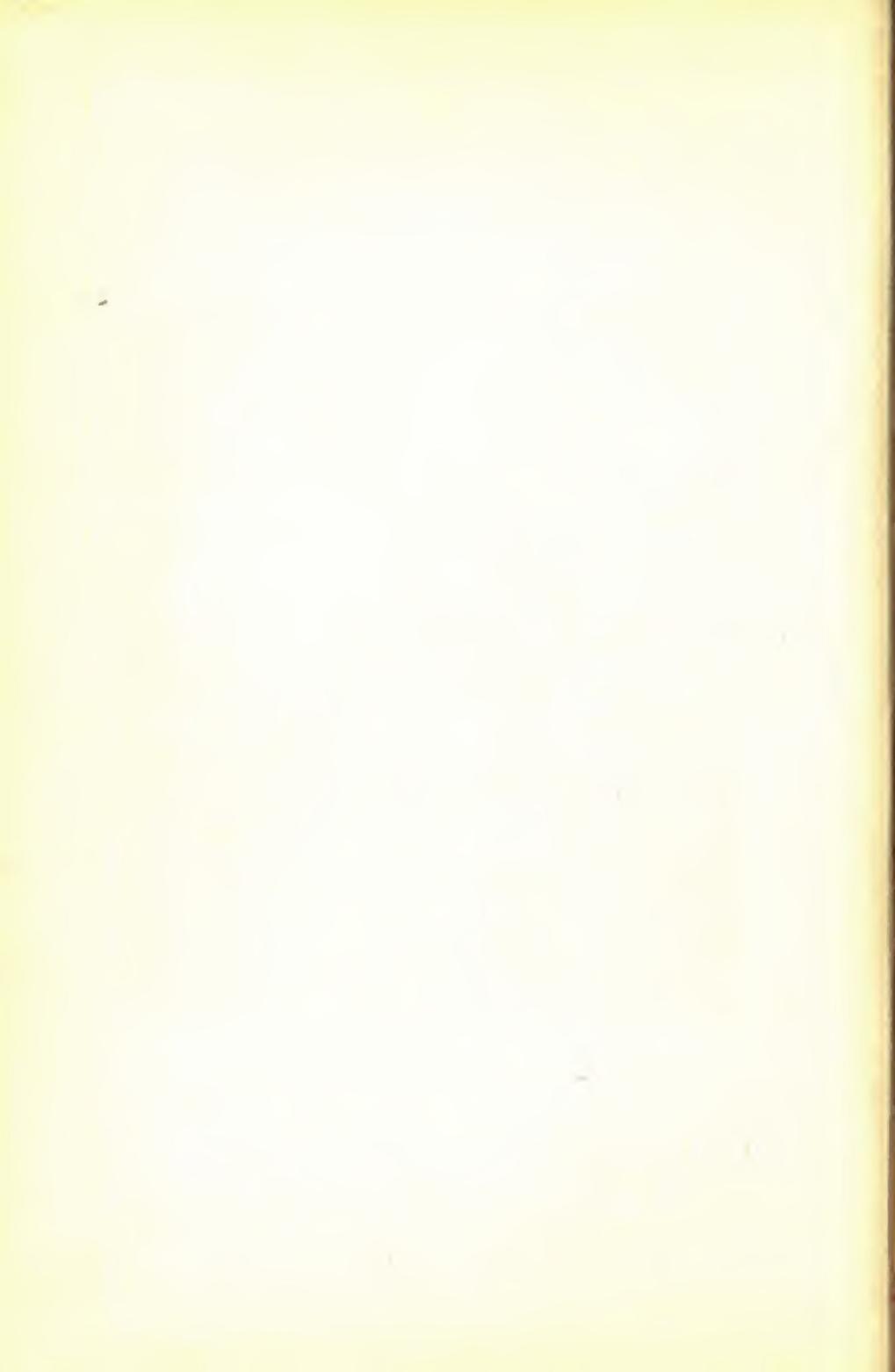
Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
 I find a magic bark ;
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :
 I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light !
 Three angels bear the holy Grail :
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And star-like mingles with the stars

When on my goodly charger borne
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,



"The shrill bell rings, the censer swings."

SIR GALAHAD.



The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight — to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls —
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the cypresses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear;
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town
Met me walking on yonder way,
"And have you lost your heart?" she said;
"And are you married yet, Edward Gray?"

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away;
"Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray."

"Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's will:
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave, on the windy-hill.

"Shy she was, and I thought her cold;
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea;
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

"Cruel, cruel the words I said!
Cruelly came they back to-day:
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,
'To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.'

"There I put my face in the grass —
Whisper'd, 'Listen to my despair:
I repent me of all I did:
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!'

"Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
And here the heart of Edward Gray!'

"Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree;
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

"Bitterly wept I over the stone:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away;
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
And there the heart of Edward Gray!"

WILL WATERPROOF'S
LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port:
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favor'd lips of mine;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days:
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;
The gas-light wavers dimmer;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,

Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
There must be stormy weather;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
If old things, there are new;
Ten thousand broken lights and
shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;
With fair horizons bound:
This whole wide earth of light and
shade
Comes out a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best
That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place?
Or do my peptic's differ?

For since I came to live and learn,
No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
This wheel within my head,
Which bears a season'd brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out.
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay :
Each month, a birth-day coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo;
Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !
She answer'd to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all :
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally ;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop ;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd Instier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy
That knuckled at the taw :
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and
good,

Flew over roof and easement :
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire
Came crowing over Thames.
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
Till, where the street grows straiter,
One fix'd for ever at the door,
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks !
'Tis but a steward of the can,
One shade more plump than com-
mon ;
As just and mere a serving-man
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me
down
Into the common day ?
Is it the weight of that half-crown,
Which I shall have to pay ?
For, something duller than at first,
Nor wholly comfortable.
I sit, my empty glass reversed,
And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
I take myself to task ;
Lest of the fulness of my life
I leave an empty flask :
For I had hope, by something rare
To prove myself a poet :
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up ;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup :
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches ;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone;
 'Tis gone, and let it go.
'Tis gone: a thousand such have slipt
 Away from my embraces,
And fall'n into the dusty crypt
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went
 Long since, and came no more;
With peals of genial clamor sent
 From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
 From misty men of letters;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits —
 Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
 Had yet their native glow:
Nor yet the fear of little books
 Had made him talk for show;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
 He flash'd his random speeches,
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd
 His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
 Like all good things on earth!
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
 At half thy real worth?
I hold it good, good things should pass:
 With time I will not quarrel:
It is but yonder empty glass
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
 To which I most resort,
I too must part: I hold thee dear
 For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
 Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
 The sphere thy fate allots:
Thy latter days increased with pence

Go down among the pots:
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
 In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
 Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
 To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
 Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
 The thick-set hazel dies;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
 The corners of thine eyes:
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
 Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
 To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
 Of life, shalt earn no more;
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
 Shall show thee past to Heaven:
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
 A pint-pot neatly graven.

LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,
 And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
 To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:
 Lovers long-betroth'd were they:
They too will wed the morrow morn:
 God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, "Who was this that went from
thee?"

"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thank'd!" said Alice the
nurse,
"That all comes round so just and
fair:
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,
my nurse?"
Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so
wild?"
"As God's above," said Alice the
nurse,
"I speak the truth: you are my
child."

"The old Earl's daughter died at my
breast;
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother," she said, "if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the
nurse,
"But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord
Ronald's,
When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,
"I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the
nurse,

"But keep the secret all ye can."
She said, "Not so: but I will know
If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice
the nurse,

"The man will cleave unto his
right."

"And he shall have it," the lady
replied,
"Tho' I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother
dear!

"Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."
"O mother, mother, mother," she said,
"So strange it seems to me."

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare:
She went by dale, and she went by
down,
With a single rose in her air.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had
brought

Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his
tower:

"O Lady Clare, you shame your
worth!
Why come you drest like a village
maid,
That are the flower of the earth?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are:
I am a beggar born," she said,
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,

"For I am yours in word and in deed.

Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,

"Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up!

Her heart within her did not fail:

She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,

And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn:
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood:

"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the next in blood —

"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare."

THE CAPTAIN.

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

He that only rules by terror
Doeth grievous wrong.

Deep as Hell I count his error.

Let him hear my song.

Brave the Captain was: the seamen
Made a gallant crew,
Gallant sons of English freemen,
Sailors bold and true.

But they hated his oppression,
Stern he was and rash;
So for every light transgression
Doom'd them to the lash.

Day by day more harsh and cruel
Seem'd the Captain's mood.

Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
Burnt in each man's blood.

Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
Hoped to make the name

Of his vessel great in story,
Wheresoe'er he came.

Se they pass by capes and islands,
Many a harbor-mouth,

Sailing under palmy highlands
Far within the South.

On a day when they were going

O'er the lone expanse,
In the north, her canvas flowing,
Rose a ship of France.
Then the Captain's color heighten'd,
Joyful came his speech:
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
In the eyes of each.
"Chase," he said: the ship flew forward,

And the wind did blow;
Stately, lightly, went she Norward,
Till she near'd the foe.
Then they look'd at him they hated,
Had what they desired:
Mute with folded arms they waited —
Not a gun was fired.

But they heard the foeman's thunder
Roaring out their doom;
All the air was torn in sunder,
Crashing went the boom,
Spars were splinter'd, decks were shattered,

Bullets fell like rain;
Over mast and deck were scatter'd
Blood and brains of men.
Spars were splinter'd; decks were broken:

Every mother's son —
Down they dropt — no word was spoken —

Each beside his gun.
On the decks as they were lying,
Were their faces grim.
In their blood, as they lay dying,
Did they smile on him.

Those, in whom he had reliance
For his noble name,
With one smile of still defiance
Sold him unto shame.
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,

Pale he turn'd and red,
Till himself was deadly wounded
Falling on the dead.

Dismal error! fearful slaughter!
Years have wander'd by,
Side by side beneath the water
Crew and Captain lie;
There the sunlit ocean tosses
O'er them mouldering,
And the lonely seabird crosses
With one waft of the wing.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

Is her ear he whispers gayly,
 "If my heart by signs can tell,
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
 And I think thou lov'st me well." She replies, in accents fainter,
 "There is none I love like thee." He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
 He to lips, that fondly falter,
 Presses his without reproof : Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father's roof.
 "I can make no marriage present : Little can I give my wife.
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,
 And I love thee more than life." They by parks and lodges going
 See the lordly castles stand : Summer woods, about them blowing,
 Made a murmur in the land.
 From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,
 "Let us see these handsome houses Where the wealthy nobles dwell." So she goes by him attended,
 Hears him lovingly converse,
 Sees whatever fair and splendid Lay betwixt his home and hers ; Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
 Parks and order'd gardens great,
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,
 Built for pleasure and for state.
 All he shows her makes him dearer : Evermore she seems to gaze On that cottage growing nearer,
 Where they twain will spend their days.
 O but she will love him truly ! He shall have a cheerful home ; She will order all things duly,
 When beneath his roof they come.
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
 Till a gateway she discerns With armorial bearings stately,
 And beneath the gate she turns ; Sees a mansion more majestic Than all those she saw before : Many a gallant gay domestic Bows before him at the door.
 And they speak in gentle murmur, When they answer to his call,

While he treads with footsteps firmer, Leading on from hall to hall.
 And, while now she wonders blindly, Nor the meaning can divine,
 Proudly turns he round and kindly, "All of this is mine and thine."
 Here he lives in state and bounty, Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
 Not a lord in all the county Is so great a lord as he.
 All at once the color flushes Her sweet face from brow to chin : As it were with shame she blushes, And her spirit changed within.
 Then her countenance all over Pale again as death did prove : But he clasp'd her like a lover, And he cheer'd her soul with love.
 So she strove against her weakness, Tho' at times her spirit sank : Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
 To all duties of her rank : And a gentle consort made he,
 And her gentle mind was such That she grew a noble lady,
 And the people loved her much.
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her, And perplex'd her, night and morn,
 With the burthen of an honor Unto which she was not born.
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter, And she murmur'd, "Oh, that he Were once more that landscape-painter,
 Which did win my heart from me !" So she droop'd and droop'd before him, Fading slowly from his side : Three fair children first she bore him, Then before her time she died.
 Weeping, weeping late and early, Walking up and pacing down,
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh, Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
 And he came to look upon her, And he look'd at her and said,
 "Bring the dress and put it on her, That she wore when she was wed." Then her people, softly treading, Bore to earth her body, drest In the dress that she was wed in, That her spirit might have rest.

THE VOYAGE.

I.

We left behind the painted buoy
 That tosses at the harbor-mouth ;
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,
 As fast we fleeted to the South :
 How fresh was every sight and sound
 On open main or winding shore !
 We knew the merry world was round,
 And we might sail for evermore.

II.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail :
 The Lady's-head upon the prow
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd
 the gale.
 The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
 And swept behind ; so quick the run,
 We felt the good ship shake and reel,
 We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
 And burn the threshold of the night,
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !
 How oft the purple-skirted robe
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
 As thro' the slumber of the globe
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !

IV.

New stars all night above the brim
 Of waters lighten'd into view ;
 They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
 Changed every moment as we flew.
 Far ran the naked moon across
 The houseless ocean's heaving field,
 Or flying shone, the silver boss
 Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
 High towns on hills were dimly seen,
 We past long lines of Northern capes
 And dewy Northern meadows green.
 We came to warmer waves, and deep

Across the boundless east we drove,
 Where those long swells of breaker sweep
 The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
 Gloom'd the low coast and quivering
 brine
 With ashy rains, that spreading made
 Fantastic plume or sable pine ;
 By sands and steaming flats, and floods
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
 And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
 Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark !
 At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
 With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;
 At times a carven craft would shoot
 From havens hid in fairy bower,
 With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
 But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled
 Down the waste waters day and night,
 And still we follow'd where she led,
 In hope to gain upon her flight.
 Her face was evermore unseen,
 And fixt upon the far sea-line ;
 But each man murmur'd, "O my Queen,
 I follow till I make thee mine."

IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
 Like Fancy made of golden air,
 Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
 Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
 Now high on waves that idly burst
 Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd
 the sea,
 And now, the bloodless point reversed,
 She bore the blade of Liberty.

x.

And only one among us — him
We pleased not — he was seldom pleased:
He saw not far: his eyes were dim :
But ours he swore were all diseased.
"A ship of fools," he shriek'd in spite,
"A ship of fools," he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

xi.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;
We lov'd the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn.
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and thro' the counter gale ?

xii.

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led :
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead,
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before :
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND
QUEEN GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

Like souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :
By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
She seem'd a part of joyous Spring :
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before ;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :
And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prance springs
By night to every warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his wordly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver :
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river:
No where by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can
say:

Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way;
"It is no wonder," said the lords,
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen:
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome
mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been:
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
"This beggar maid shall be my
queen!"

THE EAGLE.

FRAGMENT.

He clasps the crag with crooked
hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow:
From fringes of the faded eve,

O, happy planet, eastward go;
Till over thy dark shoulder glow

Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

COME not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my
grave,

To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou
wouldst not save.

There let the wind sweep and the
plover cry;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy
crime

I care no longer, being all unblest:
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick
of Time,

And I desire to rest.

Pass on, weak heart, and leave me
where I lie:
Go by, go by.

THE LETTERS.

I.

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant
air,
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
And saw the altar cold and bare.
A clog of lead was round my feet,
A band of pain across my brow;
"Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall
meet
Before you hear my marriage vow."

II.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
That mock'd the wholesome human
heart,

And then we met in wrath and wrong,
We met, but only meant to part.
Full cold my greeting was and dry;
She faintly smiled, she hardly
moved;
I saw with half-unconscious eye
She wore the colors I approved.

III.

She took the little ivory chest,
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
Then raised her head with lips com-
prest,
And gave my letters back to me.
And gave the trinkets and the rings,
My gifts, when gifts of mine could
please;
As looks a father on the things
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

IV.

She told me all her friends had said ;
I raged against the public liar;
She talk'd as if her love were dead,
But in my words were seeds of fire.
"No more of love ; your sex is known :
I never will be twice deceived.
Henceforth I trust the man alone,
The woman cannot be believed.

V.

"Thro' slander, meanest spawn of
Hell —
And women's slander is the worst,
And you, whom once I lov'd so well,
"Thro' you, my life will be accurst."
I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
I shook her breast with vague
alarms —
Like torrents from a mountain source
We rush'd into each other's arms.

VI.

We parted: sweetly gleam'd the stars,
And sweet the vapor-braided blue,
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
As homeward by the church I drew.
The very graves appear'd to smile,
So fresh they rose in shadow'd
swells;
"Dark porch," I said, "and silent
aisle,
There comes a sound of marriage
bells.

THE VISION OF SIN.

I.

I HAD a vision when the night was late :
A youth came riding toward a palace-
gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would
have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him
down.
And from the palace came a child of
sin,
And took him by the curls, and led
him in,
Where sat a company with heated
eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should
arise :
A sleepy light upon their brows and
lips —
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles
and capes —
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid
shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine,
and piles of grapes.

II.

Then methought I heard a mellow
sound,
Gathering up from all the lower
ground ;
Narrowing in to where they sat assem-
bled
Low voluptuous music winding trem-
bled,
Wov'n in circles : they that heard it
sigh'd,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones
replied ;
Till the fountain spouted, showering
wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;
Then the music touch'd the gates and
died ;
Rose again from where it seem'd to
fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing
gale ;

Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throb'd and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round:
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew:
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn:
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded: and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded: and I thought I would have spoken,
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late:
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapor touch'd the palace gate,
And link'd again. I saw within my head

A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean
as death,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

IV.

"Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay."

"Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
See that sheets are on my bed;
What! the flower of life is past:
It is long before you wed."

"Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath!
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death."

"I am old, but let me drink;
Bring me spices, bring me wine;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine."

"Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay."

"Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee:
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?"

"Let me screw thee up a peg:
Let me loose thy tongue with wine:
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?"

"Thou shalt not be saved by works:
Thou hast been a sinner too:
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!"

"Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born."

- "We are men of ruin'd blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-dries.
- "Name and fame! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the
schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Bandied by the hands of fools.
- "Friendship! — to be two in one —
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouthes behind my back.
- "Virtue! — to be good and just —
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.
- "O! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.
- "Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.
- "Drink, and let the parties rave :
They are fill'd with idle spleen ;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean
- "He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.
- "Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.
- "Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gayly doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.
- "No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house :

- And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.
- "Let her go ! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.
- "Drink to lofty hopes that cool —
Visions of a perfect State :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.
- "Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.
- "Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;
Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.
- "Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.
- "Tell me tales of thy first love —
April hopes, the fools of chance ;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.
- "Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.
- "Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads !
- "You are bones, and what of that ?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.
- "Death is king, and Vivat Rex !
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam — if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

"No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye — nor yet your lip :
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo ! God's likeness — the ground-plan —
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed :
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed !

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath !
Drink to heavy Ignorance !
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near :
What ! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd ;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

"Fill the cup and fill the can :
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !
Dregs of life, and lees of man :
Yet we will not die forlorn."

v.

The voice grew faint : there came a further change :
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range :
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Oldplash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.
Then some one spake : "Behold ! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time."
Another said : "The crime of sense became

The crime of malice, and is equal blame."
And one : "He had not wholly quench'd his power ;
A little grain of conscience made him sour."

At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, "Is there any hope ?"
To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand ;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

"Cursed be he that moves my bones."
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gain'd a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice :

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom
Of those that wear the Poet's crown :
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry :

"Proclaim the faults he would not show :
Break lock and seal : betray the trust :
Keep nothing sacred : tis but just
The many-headed beast should know."

Ah shameless! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its
worth;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakespeare's curse on clown
and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneian pass,
The vast Akrokeranian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track'd you still on classic
ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd — here and there alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random
thrown
By fountain-urns; — and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell;
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could
utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at
play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd
hand,
And the sound of a voice that is
still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is
dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG.

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of
the street,
A light wind blew from the gates of
the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the
wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,

And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey.
And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away."

THE BROOK.

HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the East
And he for Italy—too late—too late:
One whom the strong sons of the world despise;
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,
And mellow metres more than cent for cent;
Nor could he understand how money breeds,
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make
The thing that is not as the thing that is.
O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we say,
Of those that held their heads above the crowd,
They flourish'd then or then; but life in him
Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
And nothing perfect: yet the brook he loved,
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,

Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neil-gherry air
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
To me that loved him; for "O brook," he says,
"O babbling brook," says Edmund in his rhyme,
"Whence come you?" and the brook, why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley,

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

"Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
It has more ivy; there the river; and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

"But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird;
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

"O darling Katie Willows, his one child!
A maiden of our century, yet most meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit
within.

"Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years back —
the week
Before I parted with poor Edmund, crost
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry —
crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate.
The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
Stuck; and he clamor'd from a casement, 'Run'
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,

'Run, Katie!' Katie never ran: she moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

"What was it? less of sentiment than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

"She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why?
What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said.
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,
And sketching with her slender pointed foot
Some figure like a wizard pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd
If James were coming. 'Coming every day,'
She answer'd, 'ever longing to explain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke
him short;
And James departed vext with him and her.
How could I help her? 'Would I —
was it wrong?'
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere
she spoke)

'O would I take her father for one hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me !'
And even while she spoke, I saw where James
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

"O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
To show the farm; full willingly he rose:
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.
He praised his land, his horses, his machines;
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were:
Then crost the common into Darnley chase
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:
'That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire.'
And there he told a long long-winded tale
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,

And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;
He gave them line: and five days after that
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
Who then and there had offer'd something more,
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;
He knew the man; the colt would fetch its price;
He gave them line: and how by chance at last
(It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May)
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

"Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,
Poor fellow, could he help it? recommenc'd,
And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy,
Tallyho,
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still; and so
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,
And following our own shadows thrice as long
As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content

Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river.
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in converse seasons. All are gone."

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge

The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings;
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
Divides threefold to show the fruit within:
Then, wondering, ask'd her "Are you from the farm?"
"Yes," answer'd she. "Pray stay a little: pardon me;
What do they call you?" "Katie."
"That were strange.
What surname?" "Willows." "No!"
"That is my name."
"Indeed!" and here he look'd so self-perplexed,
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.
Then looking at her; "Too happy, fresh and fair,
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,
To be the ghost of one who bore your name
About these meadows, twenty years ago."

"Have you not heard?" said Katie,
"we came back.
We bought the farm we tenanted before.
Am I so like her? so they said on board.
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
My mother, as it seems you did, the days
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.
My brother James is in the harvest-field:
But she — you will be welcome — O, come in!"

AYLMER'S FIELD.

1793.

DUST are our frames; and, gilded dust,
our pride
Looks only for a moment whole and sound;
Like that long-buried body of the king,
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,
Which at a touch of light, an air of heaven,
Slipt into ashes, and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I saw
Sunning himself in a waste field alone—
Old, and a mine of memories — who had served,
Long since, a bygone Rector of the place,
And been himself a part of what he told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that almighty man,
The county God — in whose capacious hall,
Hung with a hundred shields, the family tree ~~clad in ragm~~
Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate king — ~~lying servent~~
Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the spire,
Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-gates
And swang besides on many a windy sign —
Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head
Saw from his windows nothing save his own —
What lovelier of his own had he than her,
His only child, his Edith, whom he loved
As heiress and not heir regrettfully?
But "he that marries her, marries her name"

This flat somewhat soothed himself and wife,
His wife a faded beauty of the ~~wonder~~ Baths,
~~insipid~~ as the Queen upon a card;
Her all of thought and bearing hardly more
Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,
Little about it stirring save a brook!
A sleepy land, where under the same wheel
The same old rut would deepen year by year;
Where almost all the village had one name;
Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the Hall
And Averill Averill at the Rectory
Thrice over; so that Rectory and Hall,
Bound in an immemorial intimacy,
Were open to each other; tho' to dream
That Love could bind them closer well had made
The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up
With horror, worse than had he heard his priest
Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men
Daughters of God; so sleepy was the land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd it so,
Somewhere beneath his own low range of roofs,
Have also set his many-shielded tree?
There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage once.
When the red rose was redder than itself,
And York's white rose as red as Lancaster's,
With wounded peace which each had prick'd to death.
"Not proven" Averill said, or laughingly

"Some other race of Averills"—prov'n or no,
What cared he? what, if other or the same?
He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.
But Leolin, his brother, living oft
With Averill, and a year or two before
Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away
By one low voice to one dear neighborhood,
Would often, in his walks with Edith, claim
A distant kinship to the gracious blood
That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.

Sanguine he was: a but less vivid hue
Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom
Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes,
that still
Took joyful note of all things joyful,
beam'd,
Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,
Their best and brightest, when they dwelt on hers,
Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,
But subject to the season or the mood,
Shone like a mystic star between the less
And greater glory varying to and fro,
We know not wherefore; bounteously made,
And yet so finely, that a troublos touch
Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a day,
A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.
And these had been together from the first.
Leolin's first nurse was, five years after, hers:
So much the boy foreran: but when his date
Doubled her own, for want of playmates, he
(Since Averill was a decade and a half
His elder, and their parents underground)

Had lost his ball and flown his kite,
and roll'd
His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt
Against the rush of the air in the prone swing,
Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, aranged
Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it green
In living letters, told her fairy-tales,
Show'd her the fairy footings on the grass,
The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,
The petty marestail forest, fairy pines,
Or from the tiny pitted target blew
What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd
All at one mark, all hitting: make-believes
For Edith and himself: or else he forged,
But that was later, boyish histories
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon, wreck,
Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true love
Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and faint,
But where a passion yet unborn perhaps
Lay hidden as the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.
And thus together, save for college-times
Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair
As ever painter painted, poet sang,
Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded, grew.
And more and more, the maiden woman-grown,
He wasted hours with Averill; there, when first
The tented winter-field was broken up
Into that phalanx of the summer spears
That soon should wear the garland; there again
When burr and bine were gather'd; lastly there

At Christmas; ever welcome at the Hall,
On whose dull sameness his full tide of youth
Broke with a phosphorescence charming even
My lady; and the Baronet yet had laid
No bar between them: dull and self-involved,
Tall and erect, but bending from his height
With half-allowing smiles for all the world,
And mighty courteous in the main — his pride
Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring —
He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,
Would care no more for Leolin's walking with her
Than for his old Newfoundland's, when they ran
To loose him at the stables, for he rose
Two footed at the limit of his chain,
Roaring to make a third: and how should Love,
Whom the cross-lightnings of four chance-met eyes
Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow
Such dear familiarities of dawn?
Seldom, but when he does, Master of all.

So these young hearts not knowing that they loved,
Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar
Between them, nor by plight or broken ring
Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,
Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied
By Averill: his, a brother's love, that hung
With wings of brooding shelter o'er her peace,
Might have been other, save for Leolin's —
Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour by hour

Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and drank
The magic cup that filled itself anew.
A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.
For out beyond her lodges, where the brook
Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran
By sallowy rims, arose the laborers' homes,
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls
That dimpling died into each other, huts
At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.
Her art, her hand, her counsel all had wrought
About them: here was one that, summer-blanch'd,
Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's joy
In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden hearth
Broke from a bower of vine and honeysuckle:
One look'd all rosmtree, and another wore
A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars:
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers
About it; this, a milky-way on earth,
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's heavens,
A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;
One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;
Each, its own charm; and Edith's everywhere;
And Edith ever visitant with him,
He but less loved than Edith, of her poor:
For she — so lowly-lovely and so loving,
Queenly responsive when the loyal hand
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,

Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height
That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice
Of comfort and an open hand of help,
A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs
Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves
To ailing wife or wailing infancy
Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored;
He, loved for her and for himself.
A grasp
Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,
A childly way with children, and a laugh
Ringing like proven golden coinage true,
Were no false passport to that easy realm,
Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,
Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth
The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,
Heard the good mother softly whisper "Bless,
God bless 'em: marriages are made in Heaven."

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.
My lady's Indian-kinsman unannounced
With half a score of swarthy faces came.
His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,
Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,
Tho' seeming boastful: so when first he dash'd
Into the chronicle of a deedful day,
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile
Of patron "Good! my lady's kinsman! good!"

My lady with her fingers interlock'd,
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear
To listen: unawares they flitted off,
Busying themselves about the flowerage
That stood from out a stiff brocade
in which,
The meteor of a splendid season, she,
Once with this kinsman, also long ago,
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days:
But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him
Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life:
Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye,
Hated him with a momentary hate.
Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was he:
I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd
His oriental gifts on everyone
And most on Edith: like a storm he came,
And shook the house, and like a storm he went.
Among the gifts he left her (possibly
He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return
When others had been tested) there was one,
A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it
Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself
Fine as ice-ferns on January panes
Made by a breath. I know not whence at first,
Nor of what race, the work; but as he told
The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves
He got it; for their captain after fight,
His comrades having fought their last below,
Was climbing up the valley; at whom he shot:
Down from the beetling crag to which he clung
Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,

This dagger with him, which when
now admired
By Edith whom his pleasure was to
please,
At once the costly Sahib yielded to
her.

And Leolin, coming after he was
gone,
Tost over all her presents petulantly:
And when she show'd the wealthy
scabbard, saying
"Look what a lovely piece of work-
manship!"
Slight was his answer "Well—I care
not for it":
Then playing with the blade he
prick'd his hand,
"A gracious gift to give a lady, this!"
"But would it be more gracious"
ask'd the girl
"Were I to give this gift of his to one
That is no lady?" "Gracious? No"
said he.
"Me?—but I cared not for it. O
pardon me,
I seem to be ungraciousness itself."
"Take it" she added sweetly, "tho'
his gift;
For I am more ungracious ev'n than
you,
I care not for it either"; and he said
"Why then I love it": but Sir Aylmer
past,
And neither loved nor liked the thing
he heard.

The next day came a neighbor.
Blues and reds
They talk'd of: blues were sure of it,
he thought:
Then of the latest fox — where started
— kill'd
In such a bottom: "Peter had the
brush,"
My Peter, first": and did Sir Aylmer
know
That great pock-pitten fellow had
been caught?
Then made his pleasure echo, hand to
hand,

And rolling as it were the substance
of it
Between his palms a moment up and
down—
"The birds were warm, the birds were
warm upon him;
We have him now": and had Sir
Aylmer heard—
Nay, but he must—the land was
ringing of it—
This blacksmith border-marriage —
one they knew—
Raw from the nursery—who could
trust a child?
That cursed France with her equalities!
And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially
With nearing chair and lower'd ac-
cent) think—
For people talk'd—that it was wholly
wise
To let that handsome fellow Averill
walk
So freely with his daughter? people
talk'd—
The boy might get a notion into
him;
The girl might be entangled ere she
knew.
Sir Aylmer slowly stiffening
spoke:
"The girl and boy, Sir, know their
differences!"
"Good," said his friend, "but watch!"
and he, "Enough,
More than enough, Sir! I can guard
my own."
They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer
watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the
house
Had fallen first, was Edith that same
night;
Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a
rough piece
Of early rigid color, under which
Withdrawn by the counter door to
that
Which Leolin open'd, she cast back
upon him
A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He,
as one

Caught in a burst of unexpected
 storm,
 And pelted with outrageous epi-
 thets,
 Turning beheld the Powers of the
 House
 On either side the hearth, indignant;
 her,
 Cooling her false cheek with a feather-
 fan,
 Him, glaring, by his own stale devil
 spurr'd,
 And, like a beast hard-ridden, breath-
 ing hard.
 "Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,
 Presumptuous! trusted as he was with
 her,
 The sole succeeder to their wealth,
 their lands,
 The last remaining pillar of their
 house,
 The one transmitter of their ancient
 name,
 Their child." "Our child!" "Our
 heiress!" "Ours!" for still,
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow,
 came
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said,
 "Boy, mark me! for your fortunes
 are to make.
 I swear you shall not make them out
 of mine.
 Now inasmuch as you have practised
 on her,
 Perplext her, made her half forget
 herself,
 Swerve from her duty to herself and
 us—
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impos-
 sible,
 Far as we track ourselves—I say
 that this—
 Else I withdraw favor and counte-
 nance
 From you and yours for ever—shall
 you do.
 Sir, when you see her—but you shall
 not see her—
 No, you shall write, and not to her,
 but me:
 And you shall say that having spoken
 with me,

And after look'd into yourself, you
 find
 That you meant nothing—as indeed
 you know
 That you meant nothing. Such a
 match as this!
 Impossible, prodigious!" These were
 words,
 As meted by his measure of himself,
 Arguing boundless forbearance: after
 which,
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer,
 "I
 So foul a traitor to myself and her,
 Never oh never," for about as long
 As the wind-hover hangs in balance,
 paused
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm
 within,
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and
 crying
 "Boy, should I find you by my doors
 again,
 My men shall lash you from them like
 a dog;
 Hence!" with a sudden execration
 drove
 The footstool from before him, and
 arose;
 So, stammering "scoundrel" out of
 teeth that ground
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin
 still
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old
 man
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel
 stood
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary
 face
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth.
 but now,
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd
 moon,
 Vext with unworthy madness, and deform'd.
 Slowly and conscious of the rageful
 eye
 That watch'd him, till he heard the
 ponderous door
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro'
 the land.

Went Leolin; then, his passions all in flood
 And masters of his motion, furiously Down thro' the bright lawns to his brother's ran,
 And foam'd away his heart at Averill's ear:
 Whom Averill solaced as he might, amazed:
 The man was his, had been his father's, friend:
 He must have seen, himself had seen it long;
 He must have known, himself had known: besides,
 He never yet had set his daughter forth
 Here in the woman-markets of the west,
 Where our Caucasians let themselves be sold.
 Some one, he thought, had slander'd Leolin to him.
 "Brother, for I have loved you more as son
 Than brother, let me tell you: I myself —
 What is their pretty saying? jilted, is it?
 Jilted I was: I say it for your peace. Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the shame
 The woman should have borne, humili- ated,
 I lived for years a stunted sunless life; Till after our good parents past away
 Watching your growth, I seem'd again to grow.
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying you: The very whitest lamb in all my fold
 Loves you: I know her: the worst thought she has
 Is whiter even than her pretty hand: She must prove true: for, brother, where two fight
 The strongest wins, and truth and love are strength,
 And you are happy: let her parents be."

But Leolin cried out the more upon them —

Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress, wealth,
 Their wealth, their heiress! wealth enough was theirs
 For twenty matches. Were he lord of this,
 Why twenty boys and girls should marry on it,
 And forty blest ones bless him, and himself
 Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He believed
 This filthy marriage-hindering Main- mon made
 The harlot of the cities: nature crost Was mother of the foul adulteries That saturate soul with body. Name, too! name,
 Their ancient name! they might be proud; its worth Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she had look'd
 Darling, to-night! they must have rated her
 Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-lords,
 These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,
 Who had mildew'd in their thousands, doing nothing Since Egbert — why, the greater their disgrace!
 Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that!
 Not keep it noble, make it nobler! fools,
 With such a vantage-ground for nobleness!
 He had known a man, a quintessence of man.
 The life of all — who madly loved — and he,
 Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,
 Had rioted his life out, and made an end.
 He would not do it! her sweet face and faith
 Held him from that: but he had powers, he knew it:
 Back would he to his studies, make a name,

Name, fortune too : the world should
ring of him
To shaine these mouldy Aylmers in
their graves :
Chancellor, or what is greatest would
he be —
"O brother, I am grieved to learn
your grief —
Give me my fling, and let me say my
say."

At which, like one that sees his own
excess,
And easily forgives it as his own,
He laugh'd ; and then was mute ; but
presently
Wept like a storm : and honest Averill
seeing
How low his brother's mood had fallen,
feteh'd
His richest beeswing from a binn re-
served
For banquets, praised the waning red,
and told
The vintage — when *this* Aylmer came
of age —
Then drank and past it ; till at length
the two,
Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,
agreed
That much allowance must be made
for men.
After an angry dream this kindlier
glow .
Faded with morning, but his purpose
held.

Yet once by night again the lovers
met,
A perilous meeting under the tall pines
That darken'd all the northward of
her Hall.
Him, to her meek and modest bosom
prest
In agony, she promised that no force,
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter
her :
He, passionately hopefuller, would go,
Labor for his own Edith, and return
In such a sunlight of prosperity
He should not be rejected. " Write to
me !

They loved me, and because I love
their child
They hate me : there is war between
us, dear,
Which breaks all bonds but ours ; we
must remain
Sacred to one another." So they
talk'd,
Poor children, for their comfort : the
wind blew ;
The rain of heaven, and their own
bitter tears,
Tears, and the careless rain of heaven,
mixt
Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each
other
In darkness, and above them roar'd
the pine.

So Leolin went ; and as we task our-
selves
To learn a language known but smat-
teringly
In phrases here and there at random,
toil'd
Mastering the lawless science of our
law,
That codeless myriad of precedent,
That wilderness of single instances,
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune
led,
May beat a pathway out to wealth and
fame.
The jests, that flash'd about the plead-
er's room,
Lightning of the hour, the pun, the
scurrilous tale, —
Old scandals buried now seven decades
deep
In other scandals that have lived and
died,
And left the living scandal that shall
die —
Were dead to him already ; bent as he
was
To make disproof of scorn, and strong
in hopes,
And prodigal of all brain-labor he,
Charier of sleep, and wine, and exer-
cise,
Except when for a breathing-while at
eve,

Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran
 Beside the river-bank: and then indeed
 Harder the times were, and the hands
 of power
 Were bloodier, and the according
 hearts of men
 Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-breeze,
 Which fann'd the gardens of that rival
 rose
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering
 His former talks with Edith, on him
 breathed
 Far purelier in his rushings to and fro,
 After his books, to flush his blood with
 air,
 Then to his books again. My lady's
 cousin,
 Half-sickening of his pension'd after-
 noon,
 Drove in upon the student once or
 twice,
 Ran a Malayan amuck against the
 times,
 Had golden hopes for France and all
 mankind,
 Answer'd all queries touching those at
 home
 With a heaved shoulder and a saucy
 smile,
 And fain had haled him out into the
 world,
 And air'd him there: his nearer friend
 would say
 "Screw not the chord too sharply lest
 it snap."
 Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger
 forth
 From where his worldless heart had
 kept it warm,
 Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of
 him
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise:
 For heart, I think, help'd head: her
 letters too,
 Tho' far between, and coming fitfully
 Like broken music, written as she
 found
 Or made occasion, being strictly
 watch'd,

Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till
 he saw
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon
 him.
 But they that cast her spirit into
 flesh,
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued
 themselves
 To sell her, those good parents, for her
 good.
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or
 wealth
 Might lie within their compass, him
 they lured
 Into their net made pleasant by the
 baits
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.
 So month by month the noise about
 their doors,
 And distant blaze of those dull ban-
 quets, made
 The mighty wirer of their innocent
 hare
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit
 So often, that the folly taking wings
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the
 wind
 With rumor, and became in other fields
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,
 And laughter to their lords: but those
 at home,
 As hunters round a hunted creature
 draw,
 The cordon close and closer toward
 the death,
 Narrow'd her goings out and comings
 in;
 Forbade her first the house of Averill,
 Then closed her access to the wealthier
 farms,
 Last from her own home-circle of the
 poor
 They barr'd her: yet she bore it: yet
 her cheek
 Kept color: wondrous! but, O mystery!
 What amulet drew her down to that
 old oak,
 So old, that twenty years before, a
 part

Falling had let appear the brand of John—
 Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,
 but now
 The broken base of a black tower, a
 cave
 Of touchwood, with a single flourish-
 ing spray.
 There the manorial lord too curiously
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-
 dust
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-
 trove ;
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and
 read
 Writting a letter from his child, for
 which
 Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to
 fly,
 But scared with threats of jail and
 halter gave
 To him that fluster'd his poor parish
 wits
 The letter which he brought, and swore
 besides
 To play their go-between as heretofore
 Nor let them know themselves be-
 tray'd ; and then,
 Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,
 went
 Hating his own lean heart and miser-
 able.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot
 dream
 The father panting woke, and oft, as
 dawn
 Aroused the black republic on his elms,
 Sweeping the frothly from the fescue
 brush'd
 Thro' the dim meadow toward his
 treasure-trove,
 Seized it, took home, and to my lady,
 — who made
 A downward crescent of her minion
 mouth,
 Listless in all despondence,— read ;
 and tore,
 As if the living passion symbol'd there
 Were living nerves to feel the rent;
 and burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self
 defiled,
 Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks
 of scorn
 In babyisms, and dear diminutives
 Scatter'd all over the vocabulary
 Of such a love as like a chidden child,
 After much wailing, hush'd itself at
 last
 Hopeless of answer: then tho' Averill
 wrote
 And bade him with good heart sustain
 himself —
 All would be well — the lover heeded
 not,
 But passionately restless came and
 went,
 And rustling once at night about the
 place,
 There by a keeper shot at, slightly
 hurt,
 Raging return'd : nor was it well for her
 Kept to the garden now, and grove of
 pines,
 Watch'd even there ; and one was set
 to watch
 The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd
 them all,
 Yet bitterer from his readings : once
 indeed,
 Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride
 in her,
 She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her
 tenderly
 Not knowing what possess'd him :
 that one kiss
 Was Leolin's one strong rival upon
 earth ;
 Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,
 Seem'd hope's returning rose : and
 then ensued
 A Martin's summer of his faded love,
 Or ordeal by kindness ; after this
 He seldom crost his child without a
 sneer ;
 The mother flow'd in shallower acrimo-
 nies :
 Never one kindly smile, one kindly
 word :
 So that the gentle creature shut from
 all
 Her charitable use, and face to face

With twenty months of silence, slowly lost
 Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.
 Last, some low fever ranging round to spy
 The weakness of a people or a house,
 Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,
 or men,
 Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt —
 Save Christ as we believe him — found the girl
 And flung her down upon a couch of fire,
 Where careless of the household faces near,
 And crying upon the name of Leolin,
 She, and with her the race of Aylmer,
 past.

Star to star vibrates light: may soul to soul
 Strike thro' a finer element of her own?
 So, — from afar, — touch as at once ? or why
 That night, that moment, when she named his name,
 Did the keen shriek " Yes love, yes, Edith, yes,"
 Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers woke,
 And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,
 With a weird bright eye, sweating and trembling,
 His hair as it were crackling into flames,
 His body half flung forward in pursuit,
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a flyer:
 Nor knew he wherefore he had made the cry;
 And being much befool'd and idioted By the rough amity of the other, sank As into sleep again. The second day, My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in, A breaker of the bitter news from home,
 Found a dead man, a letter edged with death

Beside him, and the dagger which himself Gave Edith, redd'n'd with no bandit's blood:
 " From Edith " was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his death.
 And when he came again, his flock believed —
 Beholding how the years which are not Time's
 Had blasted him — that many thousand days
 Were clipt by horror from his term of life.
 Yet the sad mother, for the second death
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of the first,
 And being used to find her pastor texts,
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him
 To speak before the people of her child,
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day rose:
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded woods
 Was all the life of it; for hard on these,
 A breathless burthen of low-folded heavens
 Stifled and chill'd at once; but every roof
 Sent out a listener: many too had known
 Edith among the hamlets round, and since
 The parents' harshness and the hapless loves
 And double death were widely murmur'd, left
 Their own gray tower, or plain-faced tabernacle,
 To hear him; all in mourning these, and those
 With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove

Or kerchief; while the church,— one
night, except
For greenish glimmerings thro' the
lanceets,— made
Still paler the pale head of him, who
tower'd
Above them, with his hopes in either
grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd
Averill,
His face magnetic to the hand from
which
Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd
thro'
His brief prayer-prelude, gave the
verse "Behold,
Your house is left unto you desolate!"
But lapsed into so long a pause
again
As half amazed half frightened all his
flock:
Then from his height and loneliness
of grief
Bore down in flood, and dash'd his
angry heart
Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became
one sea,
Which rolling o'er the palaces of the
proud,
And all but those who knew the liv-
ing God —
Eight that were left to make a purer
world —
When since had flood, fire, earthquake,
thunder, wrought
Such waste and havoc as the idola-
tries,
Which from the low light of mortality
Shot up their shadows to the Heaven
of Heavens,
And worshipt their own darkness as
the Highest?
"Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy
brute Baäl,"
And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,
For with thy worst self hast thou
clothed thy God.
Then came a Lord in no wise like to
Baäl.

The babe shall lead the lion. Surely
now
The wilderness shall blossom as the
rose.
Crown thyself, worm, and worship
thine own lusts! —
No coarse and blockish God of acreage
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel
to —
Thy God is far diffused in noble groves
And princely halls, and farms, and
flowing lawns,
And heaps of living gold that daily
grow,
And title-scrolls and gorgeous herald-
ries.
In such a shape dost thou behold thy
God.
Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for him;
for thine
Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair
Ruffled upon the scarf-skin, even while
The deathless ruler of thy dying house
Is wounded to the death that cannot
die;
And tho' thou numberest with the
followers
Of One who cried, 'Leave all and fol-
low me.'
Thee therefore with His light about
thy feet,
Thee with His message ringing in thine
ears,
Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord
from Heaven,
Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,
Wonderful, Prince of peace, the
Mighty God,
Count the more base idolater of the
two;
Crueller: as not passing thro' the fire
Bodies, but souls — thy children's —
thro' the smoke.
The blight of low desires — darkening
thine own
To thine own likeness; or if one of
these,
Thy better born unhappily from thee,
Should, as by miracle, grow straight
and fair —
Friends, I was bid to speak of such a
one

By those who most have cause to sorrow for her —
 Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,
 Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,
 Fair as the angel that said 'Hail!' she seem'd,
 Who entering fill'd the house with sudden light.
 For so mine own was brighten'd: where indeed
 The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven
 Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway? whose the babe
 Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,
 Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child of shame
 The common care whom no one cared for, leapt
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,
 As with the mother he had never known,
 In gambols; for her fresh and innocent eyes
 Had such a star of morning in their blue,
 That all neglected places of the field
 Broke into nature's music when they saw her.
 Low was her voice, but won mysterious way
 Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder one
 Was all but silence — free of alms her hand —
 The hand that rob'd your cottage-walls with flowers
 Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;
 How often placed upon the sick man's brow
 Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow smooth!
 Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?
 One burthen and she would not lighten it?
 One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?
 Or when some heat of difference sparkled out,

How sweetly would she glide between your wraths,
 And steal you from each other! for she walk'd
 Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love,
 Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!
 And one — of him I was not bid to speak —
 Was always with her, whom you also knew.
 Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.
 And these had been together from the first;
 They might have been together till the last.
 Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely tried,
 May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,
 Without the captain's knowledge: hope with me.
 Whose shame is that, if he went hence with shame?
 Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these
 I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,
 'My house is left unto me desolate.'"

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept; but some, Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than those That knit themselves for summer shadow, scowl'd At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he saw No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but fork'd Of the near storm, and aiming at his head, Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-like, Erect: but when the preacher's cadence flow'd Softening thro' all the gentle attributes Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his face,

Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth;
And "O pray God that he hold up" she thought
"Or surely I shall shame myself and him."

"Nor yours the blame—for who beside your hearths
Can take her place—if echoing me you cry
'Our house is left unto us desolate'?
But thou, O thou that killst, hadst thou known,
O thou that stonest, hadst thou understood
The things belonging to thy peace and ours!
Is there no prophet but the voice that calls
Doom upon kings, or in the waste
'Repent'?
Is not our own child on the narrow way,
Who down to those that saunter in the broad
Cries 'Come up hither,' as a prophet to us?
Is there no stoning save with flint and rock?
Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—
No desolation but by sword and fire?
Yes, as your moanings witness, and myself
Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.
Give me your prayers, for he is past your prayers,
Not past the living fount of pity in Heaven.
But I that thought myself long-suffering, meek,
Exceeding 'poor in spirit'—how the words
Have twisted back upon themselves, and mean
Vileness, we are grown so proud—I wish'd my voice
A rushing tempest of the wrath of God
To blow these sacrifices thro' the world—
Sent like the twelve-divided concubine

To inflame the tribes: but there—
out yonder—earth
Lightens from her own central Hell
—O there
The red fruit of an old idolatry—
The heads of chiefs and princes fall
so fast,
They cling together in the ghastly sack—
The land all shambles—naked marriages
Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd France,
By shores that darken with the gathering wolf,
Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.
Is this a time to madden madness then?
Was this a time for these to flaunt their pride?
May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense as those
Which hid the Holiest from the people's eyes
Ere the great death, shroud this great sin from all!
Doubtless our narrow world must canvass it:
Or rather pray for those and pity them,
Who, thro' their own desire accomplish'd, bring
Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the grave—
Who broke the bond which they desired to break,
Which else had link'd their race with times to come—
Who wove coarse webs to snare her purity,
Grossly contriving their dear daughter's good—
Poor souls, and knew not what they did, but sat
Ignorant, devising their own daughter's death!
May not that earthly chastisement suffice?
Have not our love and reverence left them bare?
Will not another take their heritage?
Will there be children's laughter in their hall
For ever and for ever, or one stone

Left on another, or is it a light thing
That I, their guest, their host, their
ancient friend,
I made by these the last of all my
race,
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as
cried
Christ ere His agony to those that
swore
Not by the temple but the gold, and
made
Their own traditions God, and slew
the Lord,
And left their memories a world's
curse — ‘Behold,
Your house is left unto you deso-
late’!”

Ended he had not, but she brook'd
no more:
Long since her heart had beat remorse-
lessly,
Her cramp't-up sorrow pain'd her, and
a sense
Of meanness in her unresisting life.
Then their eyes vext her; for on en-
tering
He had cast the curtains of their seat
aside—
Black velvet of the costliest—she
herself
Had seen to that: fain had she closed
them now,
Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd
Her husband inch by inch, but when
she laid,
Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he
veil'd
His face with the other, and at once,
as falls
A creeper when the prop is broken,
fell
The woman shrieking at his feet, and
swoon'd.
Then her own people bore along the
nave
Her pendent hands, and narrow mea-
gre face
Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty
years:
And her the Lord of all the landscape
round

Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd
out
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded
ways
Stumbling across the market to his
death,
Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and
seem'd
Always about to fall, grasping the
pews
And oaken finials till he touch'd the
door;
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot
stood,
Strode from the porch, tall and erect
again.

But nevermore did either pass the
gate
Save under pall with bearers. In one
month,
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier
hours,
The childless mother went to seek her
child;
And when he felt the silence of his
house
About him, and the change and not
the change,
And those fixt eyes of painted ances-
tors
Staring for ever from their gilded
walls
On him their last descendant, his own
head
Began to droop, to fall; the man be-
came
Imbecile; his one word was “deso-
late”;
Dead for two years before his death
was he;
But when the second Christmas came,
escaped
His keepers, and the silence which he
felt,
To find a deeper in the narrow
gloom
By wife and child; nor wanted at his
end
The dark retinue reverencing death

At golden thresholds ; nor from tender hearts,
And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd race,
Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.
Then the great Hall was wholly broken down,
And the broad woodland parell'd into farms ;
And where the two contrived their daughter's good,
Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made his run,
The hedgehog underneath the plantain bores,
The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel there
Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

SEA DREAMS.

A city clerk, but gently born and bred ;
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan child —
One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three years old :
They, thinking that her clear germander eye
Dropt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,
Came, with a month's leave given them, to the sea :
For which his gains were dock'd, however small :
Small were his gains, and hard his work ; besides,
Their slender household fortunes (for the man
Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,
Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep :
And oft, when sitting all alone, his face
Would darken, as he cursed his credulosity,
And that one unctuous mouth which lured him, rogue,

To buy strange shares in some Peruvian mine.
Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd a coast,
All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,
At close of day ; slept, woke, and went the next,
The Sabbath, pious variers from the church,
To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,
Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,
Announced the coming doom, and fulminated
Against the scarlet woman and her creed ;
For sideways up he swung his arms, and shriek'd
"Thus, thus with violence," ev'n as if he held
The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself
Were that great Angel ; "Thus with violence
Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ; Then comes the close." The gentle-hearted wife
Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ; He at his own : but when the wordy storm
Had ended, forth they came and paced the shore,
Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,
Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce believed
(The sootflake of so many a summer still
Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the sea.
So now on sand they walk'd, and now on cliff,
Lingering about the thymy promontories,
Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,
And rosed in the east : then homeward and to bed :
Where she, who kept a tender Christian hope,
Haunting a holy text, and still to that

Returning, as the bird returns, at
night,
"Let not the sun go down upon your
wrath,"
Said, "Love, forgive him:" but he
did not speak;
And silenced by that silence lay the
wife,
Remembering her dear Lord who died
for all,
And musing on the little lives of men,
And how they mar this little by their
feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a
full tide
Rose with ground-swell, which, on the
foremost rocks
Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild
sea-smoke,
And sealed in sheets of wasteful foam,
and fell
In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon
Dead claps of thunder from within
the cliffs
Heard thro' the living roar. At this
the babe,
Their Margaret cradled near them,
wail'd and woke
The mother, and the father suddenly
cried,
"A wreck, a wreck!" then turn'd, and
groaning said,

"Forgive! How many will say, 'for-
give,' and find
A sort of absolution in the sound
To hate a little longer! No; the sin
That neither God nor man can well
forgive,
Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
Is it so true that second thoughts are
best?
Not first, and third, which are a riper
first?
Too ripe, too late! they come too late
for use.
Ah love, there surely lives in man and
beast
Something divine to warn them of
their foes:

And such a sense, when first I fronted
him,
Said, 'Trust him not;' but after,
when I came
To know him more, I lost it, knew him
less;
Fought with what seem'd my own
uncharity;
Sat at his table; drank his costly wines
Made more and more allowance for
his talk;
Went further, fool! and trusted him
with all,
All my poor scrapings from a dozen
years
Of dust and deskwork: there is no
such mine,
None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing
gold,
Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the
sea roars
Ruin: a fearful night!"

"Not fearful; fair,"
Said the good wife, "if every star in
heaven
Can make it fair: you do but hear
the tide.
Had you ill dreams?"

"O yes," he said, "I dream'd
Of such a tide swelling toward the land,
And I from out the boundless outer
deep
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd
one
Of those dark caves that run beneath
the cliffs.
I thought the motion of the boundless
deep
Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved
upon it
In darkness: then I saw one lovely star
Larger and larger. 'What a world,'
I thought,
'To live in!' but in moving on I found
Only the landward exit of the cave,
Bright with the sun upon the stream
beyond:
And near the light a giant woman sat,
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,
A pickaxe in her hand: then out I slipt

Into a land all sun and blossom, trees
As high as heaven, and every bird
that sings:
And here the night-light flickering in
my eyes
Awoke me."

"That was then your dream," she
said,
"Not sad, but sweet."

"So sweet, I lay," said he,
"And mused upon it, drifting up the
stream

In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced
The broken vision; for I dream'd that
still

The motion of the great deep bore
me on,

And that the woman walk'd upon
the brink:

I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd
her of it:

'It came,' she said, 'by working in
the mines:'

O then to ask her of my shares, I
thought;

And ask'd; but not a word; she shook
her head.

And then the motion of the current
ceased,

And there was rolling thunder; and
we reach'd

A mountain, like a wall of burs and
thorns;

But she with her strong feet up the
hill

Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at
top

She pointed seaward: there a fleet of
glass,

That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,

Sailing along before a gloomy cloud
That not one moment ceased to thun-
der, past

In sunshine: right across its track
there lay,

Down in the water, a long reef of gold,
Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad
at first

To think that in our often-ransack'd
world

Still so much gold was left; and then
I fear'd

Lest the gay navy there should splin-
ter on it,

And fearing waved my arm to warn
them off;

An idle signal, for the brittle fleet
(I thought I could have died to save
it) near'd,

Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and
vanish'd, and I woke,

I heard the clash so clearly. Now I
see

My dream was Life; the woman hon-
est Work;

And my poor venture but a fleet of
glass

Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold."

"Nay," said the kindly wife to com-
fort him,

"You raised your arm, you tumbled
down and broke

The glass with little Margaret's medi-
cine in it;

And, breaking that, you made and
broke your dream:

A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks."

"No trifle," groan'd the husband;
"yesterday

I met him suddenly in the street, and
ask'd

That which I ask'd the woman in my
dream.

Like her, he shook his head. 'Show
me the books!'

He dodged me with a long and loose
account.

'The books, the books!' but he, he
could not wait,

Bound on a matter he of life and
death:

When the great Books (see Daniel
seven and ten)

Were open'd, I should find he meant
me well;

And then began to bloat himself, and
ooze

All over with the fat affectionate smile
That makes the widow lean. 'My
dearest friend,

Have faith, have faith! We live by
faith,' said he;
' And all things work together for the
good
Of those — it makes me sick to quote
him — last
Gript my hand hard, and with God-
bless-you went.
I stood like one that had received a
blow:
I found a hard friend in his loose ac-
counts,
A loose one in the hard grip of his
hand,
A curse in his God-bless-you : then my
eyes
Pursued him down the street, and far
away,
Among the honest shoulders of the
crowd,
Read rascal in the motions of his back,
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding
knee."

"Was he so bound, poor soul?"
said the good wife;
" So are we all : but do not call him,
love,
Before you prove him, rogue, and
proved, forgive.
His gain is loss; for he that wrongs
his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears
about
A silent court of justice in his breast,
Himself the judge and jury, and him-
self
The prisoner at the bar, ever con-
demn'd:
And that drags down his life : then
comes what comes
Hereafter : and he meant, he said he
meant,
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant,
you well."

"With all his conscience and one
eye askew' —
Love, let me quote these lines, that
you may learn
A man is likewise counsel for himself,

Too often, in that silent court of
yours —
' With all his conscience and one eye
askew,
So false, he partly took himself for
true ;
Whose pious talk, when most his
heart was dry,
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round
his eye ;
Who, never naming God except for
gain,
So never took that useful name in
vain,
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross
his tool,
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe
and fool ;
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace
he forged,
And snake-like slimed his victim ere
he gorged ;
And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the
rest
Arising, did his holy oily best,
Dropping the too rough H in Hell
and Heaven,
To spread the Word by which him-
self had thriven.
How like you this old satire?"

"Nay," she said,
" I loathe it : he had never kindly
heart,
Never cared to better his own kind,
Who first wrote satire, with no pity
in it.
But will you hear my dream, for I
had one
That altogether went to music ? Still
It awed me."

Then she told it, having dream'd
Of that same coast.

— But round the North, a light,
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor,
lay,
And ever in it a low musical note
Swell'd up and died ; and, as it
swell'd, a ridge

Of breaker issued from the belt, and still
 Grew with the growing note, and when the note
 Had reach'd a thunderous fullness, on those cliffs
 Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as that
 Living within the belt) whereby she saw
 That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no more,
 But huge cathedral fronts of every age,
 Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,
 One after one: and then the great ridge drew,
 Lessening to the lessening music, back,
 And past into the belt and swell'd again
 Slowly to music: ever when it broke
 The statues, king or saint, or founder fell;
 Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin left
 Came men and women in dark clusters round,
 Some crying, "Set them up! they shall not fall!"
 And others, "Let them lie, for they have fall'n."
 And still they strove and wrangled: and she grieved
 In her strange dream, she knew not why, to find
 Their wildest wailings never out of tune
 With that sweet note; and ever as their shrieks
 Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave
 Returning, while none mark'd it, on the crowd
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd their eyes
 Glaring, with passionate looks, and swept away
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of stone,
 To the waste deeps together.

"Then I fixt
 My wistful eyes on two fair images, Both crown'd with stars and high among the stars,—
 The Virgin Mother standing with her child
 High up on one of those dark minister-fronts—
 Till she began to totter, and the child Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry
 Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I woke,
 And my dream awed me:—well—but what are dreams?
 Yours came but from the breaking of a glass,
 And mine but from the crying of a child."

"Child? No!" said he, "but this tide's roar, and his, Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms (Altho' I grant but little music there) Went both to make your dream: but if there were
 A music harmonizing our wild cries, Sphere-music such as that you dream'd about,
 Why, that would make our passions far too like
 The discords dear to the musician.
 No—
 One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns of heaven:
 True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune
 With nothing but the Devil!"

"True' indeed!
 One out of our town, but later by an hour
 Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the shore;
 While you were running down the sands, and made
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-fur-be-low flap,
 Good man, to please the child. She brought strange news.

Why were you silent when I spoke
to-night?
I had set my heart on your forgiving
him
Before you knew. We *must* forgive
the dead."

"Dead! who is dead?"

"The man your eye pursued.
A little after you had parted with
him,
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-
disease."

"Dead? he? of heart-disease? what
heart had he
To die of? dead?"

"Ah, dearest, if there be
A devil in man, there is an angel too,
And if he did that wrong you charge
him with,
His angel broke his heart. But your
rough voice
(You spoke so loud) has roused the
child again.
Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not
sleep
Without her 'little birdie'? well then,
sleep,
And I will sing you, 'birdie.'"

Saying this,
The woman half turn'd round from
him she loved,
Left him one hand, and reaching
thro' the night
Her other, found (for it was close
beside)
And half-embraced the basket cradle-
head
With one soft arm, which, like the
pliant bough
That moving moves the nest and
nestling, sway'd
The cradle, while she sang this baby
song.

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,

Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

"She sleeps: let us too, let all evil,
sleep.
He also sleeps — another sleep than
ours.
He can do no more wrong: forgive
him, dear,
And I shall sleep the sounder!"

Then the man,
"His deeds yet live, the worst is yet
to come.
Yet let your sleep for this one night
be sound:
I do forgive him!"

"Thanks, my love," she said,
"Your own will be the sweeter," and
they slept.

LUCRETIUS.

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold; for when the morn-
ing flush
Of passion and the first embrace had
died
Between them, tho' he lov'd her none
the less,
Yet often when the woman heard his
foot
Return from pacings in the field, and
ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master
took
Small notice, or austerely, for — his
mind

Half buried in some weightier argument,
Or fancy, borne perhaps upon the rise
And long roll of the Hexameter — he
past
To turn and ponder those three hundred scrolls
Left by the Teacher, whom he held divine.
She brook'd it not; but wrathful, petulant,
Dreaming some rival, sought and found a witch
Who brew'd the philtre which had power, they said,
To lead an errant passion home again.
And this, at times, she mingled with his drink,
And this destroy'd him; for the wicked broth
Confused the chemic labor of the blood,
And tickling the brute brain within the man's
Made havoc among those tender cells, and check'd
His power to shape: he loathed himself; and once
After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning calm, and cried:

" Storm in the night! for thrice I heard the rain
Rushing; and once the flash of a thunderbolt —
Methought I never saw so fierce a fork —
Struck out the streaming mountain-side, and show'd
A riotous confluence of watercourses
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

" Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods, what dreams!
For thrice I waken'd after dreams.
Perchance
We do but recollect the dreams that come

Just ere the waking: terrible! for it seem'd
A void was made in Nature; all her bonds
Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-streams
And torrents of her myriad universe,
Ruining along the illimitable inane,
Fly on to clash together again, and make
Another and another frame of things
For ever: that was mine, my dream, I knew it —
Of and belonging to me, as the dog With inward yelp and restless forefoot plies
His function of the woodland: but the next!
I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening meadow, sprang
No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,
For these I thought my dream would show to me,
But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art, Hired animalisms, vile as those that made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round me drove
In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw —
Was it the first beam of my latest day?
" Then, then, from utter gloom stood out the breasts,
The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a sword
Now over and now under, now direct, Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down shamed
At all that beauty; and as I stared, a fire,

The fire that left a roofless Ilion,
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me
that I woke.

" Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,
thine,
Because I would not one of thine own
doves,
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee ?
thine,
Forgetful how my rich proemion
makes
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy Deity !

" Deity ? nay, thy worshippers. My
tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of
these
Angers thee most, or angers thee at
all ?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far
aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite
and scorn,
Live the great life which all our greatest
fain
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

" Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like
ourselves
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I
cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender
arms
Round him, and keep him from the
lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-
house of Rome.

" Ay, but I meant not thee ; I meant
not her,
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to
see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers,
and tempt
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were
abroad ;
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter
wept
Her Deity false in human-amorous
tears ;

Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse —
Ay, and this Kypris also — did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow
forth

The all-generating powers and genial
heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the
thick blood
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs
are glad
Nosing the mother's udder, and the
bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze
of flowers :
Which things appear the work of
mighty Gods.

" The Gods ! and if I go, *my* work is
left
Unfinish'd — *if* I go. The Gods, who
haunt
The lucid interspace of world and
world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves
a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of
snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to
mar
Their sacred everlasting calm ! and
such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may
gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods,
the Gods !

If all be atoms, how then should the
Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law ? My master
held
That Gods there are, for all men so
believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and
meant
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
That Gods there are, and deathless,

Meant? I meant?
I have forgotten what I meant: my
mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are
lamed.

"Look where another of our Gods,
the Sun,
Apollo, Delius, or of older use
All-seeing Hyperion — what you
will —
Has mounted yonder; since he never
sware,
Except his wrath were wreak'd on
wretched man,
That he would only shine among the
dead
Hereafter; tales! for never yet on
earth
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roast-
ing ox
Moan round the spit — nor knows he
what he sees;
King of the East altho' he seem, and
girt
With song and flame and fragrance,
slowly lifts
His golden feet on those empurpled
stairs
That climb into the windy halls of
heaven:
And here he glances on an eye new-
born,
And gets for greeting but a wail of
pain;
And here he stays upon a freezing
orb
That fain would gaze upon him to the
last;
And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n
And closed by those who mourn a
friend in vain,
Not thankful that his troubles are no
more.
And me, altho' his fire is on my face
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can
tell
Whether I mean this day to end my-
self,
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
That men like soldiers may not quit
the post

Allotted by the Gods: but he that
holds
The Gods are careless, wherefore need
he care
Greatly for them, nor rather plunge
at once,
Being troubled, wholly out of sight,
and sink
Past earthquake — ay, and gout and
stone, that break
Body toward death, and palsy, death-
in life,
And wretched age — and worst disease
of all,
These prodigies of myriad naked-
nesses,
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeak-
able,
Abominable, strangers at my hearth
Not welcome, harpies miring every
dish,
The phantom husks of something
fouly done,
And fleeting thro' the boundless uni-
verse,
And blasting the long quiet of my
breast
With animal heat and dire insanity?

"How should the mind, except it
loved them, clasp
These idols to herself? or do they fly
Now thinner, and now thicker, like
the flakes
In a fall of snow, and so press in, per-
force
Of multitude, as crowds that in an
hour
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and
bear
The keepers down, and throng, their
rags and they
The basest, far into that council-hall
Where sit the best and stateliest of
the land?

"Can I not fling this horror off me
again,
Seeing with how great ease Nature
can smile,
Balmier and nobler from her bath of
storm,

At random ravage? and how easily
The mountain there has cast his
cloudy slough,
Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
A mountain o'er a mountain,—nay,
and within
All hollow as the hopes and fears of
men?

"But who was he, that in the gar-
den snared
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale
To laugh at—more to laugh at in
myself—
Nor look! what is it? there? yon
arbutus
Totters; a noiseless riot underneath
Strikes through the wood, sets all the
tops quivering—
The mountain quickens into Nymph
and Faun;
And here an Oread—how the sun
delights
To glance and shift about her slippery
sides,
And rosy knees and supple rounded-
ness,
And budded bosom-peaks—who this
way runs
Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,
Follows; but him I proved impossible;
Twy-natured is no nature: yet he
draws
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him
now
Beastlier than any phantom of his
kind
That ever butted his rough brother-
brute
For lust or lusty blood or provender:
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and
she
Loathes him as well; such a precipi-
tate heel,
Fledged as it were with Mercury's
ankle-wing,
Whirls her to me: but will she fling
herself,
Shameless upon me? Catch her,
goat-foot: nay,
Hide, hide them, million-myrtled
wilderness,

And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide!
do I wish—
What?—that the bush were leafless?
or to whelm
All of them in one massacre? O ye
Gods,
I know you careless, yet, behold, to
you
From childly wont and ancient use I
call—
I thought I lived securely as your-
selves—
No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-
spite,
No madness of ambition, avarice,
none:
No larger feast than under plane or
pine
With neighbors laid along the grass,
to take
Only such cups as left us friendly-
warm,
Affirming each his own philosophy—
Nothing to mar the sober majesties
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
But now it seems sonic unseen mon-
ster lays
His vast and filthy hands upon my
will,
Wrenching it backward into his; and
spoils
My bliss in being; and it was not
great;
For save when shutting reasons up in
rhythm,
Or Heliconian honey in living words,
To make a truth less harsh, I often
grew
Tired of so much within our little life,
Or of so little in our little life—
Poor little life that toddles half an
hour
Crown'd with a flower or two, and
there an end—
And since the nobler pleasure seem
to fade,
Why should I, beastlike as I find my-
self,
Not manlike end myself?—our privi-
lege—
What beast has heart to do it? And
what man,

What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph thus?
Not I; not he, who bears one name with her
Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom of kings,
When, brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,
She made her blood in sight of Collatine
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,
Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.
And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which breaks
As I am breaking now!

" And therefore now
Let her, that is the womb and tomb
of all,
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
Those blind beginnings that have made me man,
Dash them anew together at her will
Thro' all her cycles — into man once more,
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower:
But till this cosmic order everywhere
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day
Cracks all to pieces, — and that hour perhaps
Is not so far when momentary man
Shall seem no more a something to himself,
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,
And even his bones long laid within the grave,
The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,
Into the unseen for ever, — till that hour,
My golden work in which I told a truth
That stays the rolling Ixonian wheel,
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake,
and plucks

The mortal soul from out immortal hell,
Shall stand: ay, surely: then it fails at last
And perishes as I must; for O Thou, Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity, Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,
Who fail to find thee, being as thou art
Without one pleasure and without one pain,
Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not How roughly men may woo thee so they win —
Thus — thus: the soul flies out and dies in the air."

With that he drove the knife into his side:
She heard him raging, heard him fall; ran in,
Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon herself
As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd
That she but meant to win him back, fell on him,
Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd: he answer'd, " Care not thou!
Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee well!" .

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

PUBLISHED IN 1832.

I.

BURY the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II.

Where shall we lay the man whom
we deplore?

Here, in streaming London's central
roar.

Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it
grow,
And let the mournful martial music
blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the
Past.

No more in soldier fashion will he
greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the
street.

O friends, our chief state-oracle is
mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring
blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, res-
olute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influ-
ence,

Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all
men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of
strength
Which stood four-square to all the
winds that blew!

Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will
be seen no more.

V.

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with its blazon'd
deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a deeper knell in the heart be
knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing an-
them roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannone thunder his
loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them
boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
When he with those deep voices
wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from
shame;
With those deep voices our dead cap-
tain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an hon-
or'd guest,
With banner and with music, with
soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking
on my rest?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou
famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world
began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun:
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadow-
ing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron
crown

On that loud Sabbath shook the
spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd them-
selves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and
overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven
guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nil-.
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at
all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by
thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's
voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human
fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor, honor to
him,
Eternal honor to his name.

VII.

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams
forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and law-
less Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and
roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming
showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay
the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and
regret

To those great men who fought, and
kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute
control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,
the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England
whole,
And save the one true seed of free-
dom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient
throne,
That sober freedom out of which
there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate
kings;
For, saving that, ye help to save man-
kind
Till public wrong be crumbled into
dust,
And drill the raw world for the march
of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and
crown'd be just.
But wink no more in slothful over-
trust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward
wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man
who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the
hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for
power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor
flow
Thro' either babbling world of high
and low;
Whose life was work, whose language
rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one
rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on
the right:

Truth-teller was our England's Alfred
named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open
hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her
horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-
story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle
bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-
story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and
hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light
has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty
scaled
Are close upon the shining table-
lands
To which our God Himself is moon
and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind en-
dure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the states-
man pure:
Till in all lands and thro' all human
story

The path of duty be the way to glory :
And let the land whose hearts have
saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At'civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities
flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to
him,
Eternal honor to his name.

IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not
see :

Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Lay the little children clung :
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart
and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe
hung.

Ours the pain, be his the gain !
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere ;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane :
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are

we,

Until we doubt not that for one so
true

There must be other nobler work to
do

Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.

For tho' the Giant Ages heave the
hill

And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will ;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads
roll

Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build our
trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the
people's ears :
The dark crowd moves, and there are
sobs and tears :
The black earth yawns : the mortal
disappears ;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave
him.

Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY,
1852.

My Lords, we heard you speak : you
told us all
That England's honest censure went
too far ;
That our free press should cease to
brawl,
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into
war.

It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing,
into words.

We love not this French God, the
child of Hell.

Wild War, who breaks the converse
of the wise ;
But though we love kind Peace so
well,

We dare not ev'n by silence sanction
lies.

It might be safe our censures to withdraw ;

And yet, my Lords, not well : there is
a higher law. *

As long as we remain, we must speak
free,
Tho' all the storm of Europe on us
break;
No little German state are we,
But the one voice in Europe: we
must speak;
That if to-night our greatness were
struck dead,
There might be left some record of
the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be
bold.
Our Britain cannot save a tyrant
o'er.
Better the waste Atlantic roll'd
On her and us and ours for evermore.
What! have we fought for Freedom
from our prime,
At last to dodge and palter with a
public crime?

Shall we fear him? our own we never
fear'd.
From our first Charles by force we
wrung our claims.
Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
We flung the burden of the second
James.
I say, we never feared! and as for these,
We broke them on the land, we drove
them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the
people muse
In doubt if you be of our Barons'
breed—
Were those your sires who fought at
Lewes?
Is this the manly strain of Runny-
mede?
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of
this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here
were sin,
Not ours the fault if we have feeble
hosts—
If easy patrons of their kin

Have left the last free race with
naked coasts!
They knew the precious things they
had to guard:
For us, we will not spare the tyrant
one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester
may hawl,
What England was, shall her true
sons forget?
We are not cotton-spinners all,
But some love England and her
honor yet.
And these in our Thermopylæ shall
stand,
And hold against the world this honor
of the land.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

I.

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns," he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
Not the six hundred.

V.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI.

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wonder'd.
Honor the charge they made !
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred !

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL
EXHIBITION.

I.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and
sweet,
In this wide hall with earth's invention stored,
And praise the invisible universal
Lord,

Who lets once more in peace the na-
tions meet,
Where Science, Art, and Labor
have outpour'd
Their myriad horns of plenty at our
feet.

II.

O silent father of our Kings to be
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,
For this, for all, we weep our thanks
to thee !

III.

The world-compelling plan was
thine, —
And, lo ! the long laborious miles
Of Palace ; lo ! the giant aisles,
Rich in model and design ;
Harvest-tool and husbandry,
Loom and wheel and enginery,
Secrets of the sullen mine,
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,
Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,
Sunny tokens of the Line,
Polar marvels, and a feast
Of wonder, out of West and East,
And shapes and hues of Art divine !
All of beauty, all of use,
That one fair planet can produce,
Brought from under every star,
Blown from over every main,
And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,
The works of peace with works of
war.

IV.

Is the goal so far away ?
Far, how far no tongue can say,
Let us dream our dream to-day.

V.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who
reign,
From growing commerce loose her
latest chain,
And let the fair white-wing'd peace-
maker fly
To happy havens under all the sky,
And mix the seasons and the golden
hours ;
Till each man find his own in all
men's good,

And all men work in noble brotherhood,
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed towers,
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,
And gathering all the fruits of earth and crown'd with all her flowers.

A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA.

MARCH 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea, Alexandra!
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee, Alexandra!
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the street!
Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,
Scatter the blossom under her feet!
Break, happy land, into earlier flowers!
Make music, O bird, in the new-budded bowers!
Blazon your mottoes of blessing and prayer!
Welcome her, welcome her, all that is ours!
Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers!
Flames, on the windy headland flare!
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air!
Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and higher
Melt into stars for the land's desire!
Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,
Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the strand,
Roar as the sea when he welcomes the land,
And welcome her, welcome the land's desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,
Blissful bride of a blissful heir,
Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea—
O joy to the people and joy to the throne,
Come to us, love us and make us your own:
For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS MARIE ALEXANDROVNA, DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH.

MARCH 7, 1874.

I.
THE Son of him with whom we strove for power—
Whose will is lord thro' all his world-domain—
Who made the serf a man, and burst his chain—
Has given our Prince his own imperial Flower, Alexandrovna.
And welcome, Russian flower, a people's pride,
To Britain, when her flowers begin to blow!
From love to love, from home to home you go,
From mother unto mother, stately bride,
Marie Alexandrovna!

II.
The golden news along the steppes is blown,
And at thy name the Tartar tents are stirr'd;
Elburz and all the Caucasus have heard;
And all the sultry palms of India known,
Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea
 On capes of Afric as on cliffs of
 Kent,
 The Maoris and that Isle of Conti-
 nent,
 And loyal pines of Canada murmur
 thee,

Marie Alexandrovna!

III.

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty
 life! —

Yet Harold's England fell to Nor-
 man swords;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to
 Tartar hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne
 a wife,

Alexandrovna!

For thrones and peoples are as waifs
 that swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and
 flow;

But who love best have best the
 grace to know

That Love by right divine is deathless
 king,

Marie Alexandrovna!

IV.

And Love has led thee to the stranger
 land,

Where men are bold and strongly
 say their say; —
 See, empire upon empire smiles to-
 day,
 As thou with thy young lover hand in
 hand,

Alexandrovna!

So now thy fuller life is in the west,
 Whose hand at home was gracious
 to thy poor:

Thy name was blest within the nar-
 row door;

Here also, Marie, shall thy name be
 blest,

Marie Alexandrovna!

v.

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame
 again?

Or at thy coming, Princess, every-
 where,

The blue heaven break, and some
 diviner air

Breathe thro' the world and change
 the hearts of men,

Alexandrovna!

But hearts that change not, love that
 cannot cease,

And peace be yours, the peace of
 soul in soul!

And howsoever this wild world may
 roll,

Between your people's truth and man-
 ful peace,

Alfred — Alexandrovna!

THE GRANDMOTHER.

I.

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?
 Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.
 And Willy's wife has written: she never was over-wise,
 Never the wife for Willy: he wouldn't take my advice.

II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,
 Hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.
 Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.
 Eh! — but he wouldn't hear me — and Willy, you say, is gone.

III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;
 Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.
 "Here's a leg for a babe of a week!" says doctor; and he would be bound,
 There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!
 I ought to have gone before him: I wonder he went so young.
 I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not long to stay;
 Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

V.

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;
 But all my children have gone before me, I am so old:
 I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,
 All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.
 I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost me a world of woe,
 Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well
 That Jenny had tript in her time: I knew, but I would not tell.
 And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!
 But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

VIII.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,
 That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,
 That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
 But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day;
 And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.
 Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been!
 But soiling another, Annie, will never make one's self clean.

X.

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late
 I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.
 The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,
 And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirruped the nightingale.

XI.

All of a sudden he stopt: there past by the gate of the farm,
Willy, — he didn't see me, — and Jenny hung on his arm.
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how;
Ah, there's no fool like the old one — it makes me angry now.

XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant;
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtsey and went.
And I said, "Let us part: in a hundred years it'll all be the same,
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name."

XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine:
"Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill;
But marry me out of hand: we two shall be happy still."

XIV.

"Marry you, Willy!" said I, "but I needs must speak my mind,
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind."
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, "No, love, no;"
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

XV.

So Willy and I were wedded: I wore a lilac gown;
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife;
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain:
I look'd at the still little body — his trouble had all been in vain.
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another inorn:
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay:
Kind, like a man, was he; like a man, too, would have his way:
Never jealous — not he: we had many a happy year;
And he died, and I could not weep — my own time seem'd so near.

XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died :
 I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.
 And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget :
 But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,
 Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you :
 Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,
 While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too — they sing to their team :
 Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.
 They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed —
 I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive ;
 For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five :
 And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten ;
 I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve ;
 I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve :
 And the neighbors come and laugh and gossip, and so do I ;
 I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

XXIV.

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad :
 But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had ;
 And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease
 And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,
 And happy has been my life ; but I would not live it again.
 I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest ;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

XXVI.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower ;
 But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour, —
 Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next ;
 I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vexed ?

XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.
 Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God that I keep my eyes.
 There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.
 But stay with the old woman now : you cannot have long to stay.

NORTHERN FARMER.

OLD STYLE.

I.

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän ?
 Noorse ? thoort nowt o' a noorse : whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän :
 Says that I moänt 'a naw moor ääle : but I beänt a fool :
 Git ma my ääle, fur I beänt a-gooin' to breäk my rule.

II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawayways true :
 Naw soort o' koind o' use to saly the things that a do.
 I've 'ed my point o' ääle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere,
 An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

III.

Parson's a beän loikewoise, an' a sittin' ere o' my bed.
 "The amoightly's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," a said,
 An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond ;
 I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

IV.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
 But a cast oop, thot a did, 'boot Bessy Marris's barne.
 Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,
 An' I' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

V.

An' I hallus coom'd to's choorch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
 An' 'eerd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock¹ ower my 'eäd,
 An' I never knew'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

VI.

Bessy Marris's barne ! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
 Mowt a bean, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheü.
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understand ;
 I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

¹ Cockchafer.

VII.

But Parson a cooms an' a goos, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä
 "The amoightly's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," says 'eä.
 I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw sumnum said it in 'äste:
 But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weecük, an' I a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

VIII.

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass² naw, naw, tha was not born then;
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd 'um mysen;
 Moüst loike a butter-bump,¹ fur I 'eerd 'um aboot an' aboot,
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um oot.

IX.

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theor a-laäid of 'is faäce
 Doon f' the woild 'enemies² afoor I coom'd to the plaäee.
 Noäks or Thimbleby — töäner 'ed shot 'um as dead as a naäil.
 Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize — but git ma my ääle.

X.

Dubbut loook at the waäste: theor warn't not feeäd for a cow;
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' loook at it now —
 Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theor's lots o' feeäd,
 Fourseoor yows upon it an' some on it doon i' seeäd.

XI.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
 Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
 If godamoightly an' parson 'ud nobbut let me aloän,
 Meä, wi' haäte oonderd haäcre o' Squoire's an' lond o' my oän.

XII.

Do godamoightly knaw what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
 I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
 An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear a' dear!
 And I a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

XIII.

A mowt 'a taïlen owd Joänes, as 'ant nor a 'alpoth o' sense,
 Or a mowt 'a taïlen young Robins — a niver mended a fence :
 But godamoightly a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now
 Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälims to plow!

XIV.

Loook 'ow quoloty smoiles when they sees ma a passin' boy,
 Says to thessén naw doubt "what a man a beä sewer-loy!"
 Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All;
 I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

¹ Bittern.² Anemones.

XV.

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For who'd's to howd the lond ater meā thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beā, thot a weāt niver give it to Joānes,
Naw, nor a moāt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoāns.

XVI.

But summun 'ull come ater meā mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steām
Huzzin' an' maāzin' the blessed feālds wi' the Devil's oān teām.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldna abeār to see it.

XVII.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aāle ?
Doctor's a 'toātler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taāle ;
I weāt breāk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy ;
Git ma my aāle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

NORTHERN FARMER.

NEW STYLE.

I.

Doss'n thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaāly ?
Proputty, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears 'em saāly.
Proputty, proputty, proputty — Sam, thou's an ass for thy paālins.
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braāins.

II.

Woā — theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam : yon's parson's 'ouse —
Doss'n thou knew that a man mun be either a man or a mouse ?
Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to weeāk.¹
Proputty, proputty — woā then woā — let ma 'ear mysēn speālk.

III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beān a-talkin' o' thee ;
Thou's beān talkin' to muther, an' she beān a te...n' it me.
Thou'll not marry for munny — thou's sweet upo' parson's lass —
Noā — thou'll marry for luvv — an' we boāth on us thinks tha an ass.

IV.

Seell'd her todaāy goā by — Sallint's daāy — they was ringing the bells.
She's a beauty thou thinks — an' soā is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all — wot's a beauty ? — the flower as blaws.
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

¹ This week.

V.

Do'ant be stunt:¹ taäke time : I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.
 Warn't I crailed fur the lasses mysen when I wur a lad ?
 But I knew'd a Quäaker feller as often 'as towd ma this:
 " Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is ! "

VI.

An' I went wheer munny war : an' thy muther coom to 'and,
 Wi' lots o' munny laaid by, an' a niceish bit o' land.
 Maäby she warn't a beauty — I niver giv it a thowt —
 But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt ?

VII.

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäld,
 Mun be a guyness, lad, or summut, and addle² her breäld :
 Why ? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git naw 'igher ;
 An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e liggs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shire.

VIII.

An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
 Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.
 An' 'e liggs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shove,
 Woorse nor a far-welter'd³ yowe : fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

IX.

Luvv ? what's luvv ? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
 Maakin' 'em goä togither as they've good right to do.
 Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaid by ?
 Naäy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it : reäson why.

X.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,
 Cooms of a gentleman burn : an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.
 Woä then, proppty, wiltha ? — an ass as near as mayss nowt⁴ —
 Woä then, wiltha ? dangtha ! — the bees is as fell as owt.⁵

XI.

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäld, lad, out o' the fence !
 Gentleman burn ! what's gentleman burn ? is it shillins an' pence ?
 Proppty, proppty's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
 If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

XII.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steälls,
 Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkés their regular meälls.
 Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäll's to be 'nd.
 Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

¹ Obstinate.

² Earn.

³ Or fow-welter'd, — said of a sheep lying on its back in the furrow.

⁴ Makes nothing.

⁵ The flies are as fierce as anything.

xiii.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
 Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whimiver munny was got.
 Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leastways 'is munny was 'id.
 But 'e tued an' moil'd issén deäd, an' e died a good un, 'e did.

xiv.

Loook thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill
 Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
 An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;
 And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

xv.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;
 But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leave the land to Dick. —
 Coom oop, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears 'im saäy —
 Proputty, proputty, proputty — canter an' canter awaäly

THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,
 In lands of palm and southern pine;
 In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
 Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd
 In ruin, by the mountain road;
 How like a gem, beneath the city
 Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
 The torrent vineyard streaming fell
 To meet the sun and sunny waters,
 That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
 By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;
 Where, here and there, on sandy
 beaches
 A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
 Yet present in his natal grove,
 Now watching high on mountain
 cornice,
 And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
 Till, in a narrow street and dim,
 I stay'd the wheels at Cogoleto,
 And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,
 Not the clipt palm of which they boast;
 But distant color, happy hamlet,
 A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
 A light amid its olives green;
 Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
 Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
 Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
 And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
 Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
 Those niched shapes of noble mould,
 A princely people's awful princes,
 The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
 In those long galleries, were ours;
 What drives about the fresh Cascinè,
 Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma;
At Lodi, rain, Piæenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom,
the glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencil'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and blast
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splügen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest
summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.
O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold:
Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nursing of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and
Earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE. JANUARY, 1854.

COME, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy:
Your presence will be sun in winter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due;
Should eighty-thousand college-councils

Thunder "Anathema," friend, at you;
Should all our churchmen foam in spite
At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome

(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand ;
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin ;
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;
Till you should turn to dearer matters,
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;
How gain in life, as life advances,
Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold as dear ;
Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year.

WILL.

I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong !
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

II.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still !
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle in the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,

The two and thirty years were a mist
that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy
rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the
voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and
cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living
voice to me.

IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON.

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,
Within was weeping for thee:
Shadows of three dead men
Walk'd in the walks with me,
Shadows of three dead men and
thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods :
The Master was far away :
Nightingales warbled and sang
Of a passion that lasts but a day ;
Still in the house in his coffin the
Prince of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known
In courtesy like to thee :
Two dead men have I loved
With a love that ever will be :
Three dead men have I loved, and
thou art last of the three.

THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Thro' my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
"Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable :
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed ;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT.

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
.Where yon broad water sweetly,
slowly glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to
die !
Her quiet dream of life this hour
may cease.
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR BOY.

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the
rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,
"O boy, tho' thou art young and
proud,
I see the place where thou wilt lie

"The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall
play."

"Fool," he answer'd, "death is sure
To those that stay and those that
roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

"My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, 'Stay for shame';
My father raves of death and wreck,
They are all to blame, they are all
to blame.

"God help me! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me."

THE ISLET.

"WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we
go,
For a score of sweet little summers or
so?"

The sweet little wife of the singer said,
On the day that follow'd the day she
was wed,

"Whither, O whither, love, shall we
go?"

And the singer shaking his curly head
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys
There at his right with a sudden crash,
Singing, "And shall it be over the seas
With a crew that is neither rude nor
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I
know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairly-delicate palaces shine
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd
With many a rivulet high against the
Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain
flash
Above the valleys of palm and pine."

"Thither, O thither, love, let us go."

"No, no, no!
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,
There is but one bird with a musical
throat,
And his compass is but of a single
note,
That it makes one weary to hear."

"Mock me not! mock me not! love,
let us go."

"No, love, no.
For the bud ever breaks into bloom
on the tree,
And a storm never wakes on the lonely
sea,
And a worm is there in the lonely
wood,
That pierces the liver and blackens
the blood;
And makes it a sorrow to be."

CHILD-SONGS.

I. THE CITY CHILD.

DAINTY little maiden, whither would
you wander?

Whither from this pretty home, the
home where mother dwells?

"Far and far away," said the dainty
little maiden,

"All among the gardens, auriculas,
anemones,
Roses and lilies and Canterbury-
bells."

Dainty little maiden, whither would
you wander?

Whither from this pretty house,
this city-house of ours?

"Far and far away," said the dainty
little maiden,

"All among the meadows, the clover
and the clematis,
Daisies and kingcups and honey-
suckle-flowers."

II.
MINNIE AND WINNIE.

Minnie and Winnie
Slept in a shell.
Sleep, little ladies!
And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,
Silver without;
Sounds of the great sea
Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies!
Wake not soon!
Echo on echo
Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars
Peep'd into the shell.
"What are they dreaming of?
Who can tell?"

Started a green linnet
Out of the croft;
Wake, little ladies,
The sun is aloft!

THE SPITEFUL LETTER.

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,
And with it a spiteful letter.
My name in song has done him much
wrong,
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,
If men neglect your pages?
I think not much of yours or of mine,
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of
the times!
Are mine for the moment stronger?
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot,
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as
brief;
What room is left for a hater?

Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener
leaf,
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I—is that your cry?
And men will live to see it.
Well—if it be so—so it is, you know;
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,
But this is the time of hollies.
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,
How I hate the spites and the
folly!

LITERARY SQUABBLES.

An God! the petty fools of rhyme
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent stars:

Who hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite
And pinch their brethren in the throng,
And scratch the very dead for spite:

And strain to make an inch of room
For their sweet selves, and cannot
hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs and all things
here:

When one small touch of Charity
Could lift them nearer God-like state
Than if the crowned Orb should cry
Like those who cried Diana great:

And I too, talk, and lose the touch
I talk of. Surely, after all,
The noblest answer unto such
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

THE VICTIM.

I.

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low,
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,

For on them brake the sudden foe;
So thick they died the people cried,
"The Gods are moved against the
land."

The Priest in horror about his altar
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:
"Help us from famine
And plague and strife!
What would you have of us?
Human life?
Were it our nearest,
Were it our dearest,
(Answer, O answer)
We give you his life."

II.

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,
And cattle died, and deer in wood,
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
And whiten'd all the rolling flood;
And dead men lay all over the way,
Or down in a furrow scathed with
flame:
And ever and aye the Priesthood
moan'd,
Till at last it seem'd that an answer
came.
"The King is happy
In child and wife;
Take you his dearest,
Give us a life."

III.

The Priest went out by heath and hill;
The King was hunting in the wild;
They found the mother sitting still;
She cast her arms about the child.
The child was only eight summers old,
His beauty still with his years in-
creased,
His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,
He seem'd a victim due to the priest.
The Priest beheld him,
And cried with joy,
"The Gods have answer'd:
We give them the boy."

IV.

The King return'd from out the wild,
He bore but little game in hand;

The mother said, "They have taken
the child
To spill his blood and heal the
land:

The land is sick, the people diseased,
And blight and famine on all the
lea:
The holy Gods, they must be appeased,
So I pray you tell the truth to me.
They have taken our son,
They will have his life.
Is he your dearest?
Or I, the wife?"

V.

The King bent low, with hand on
brow,
He stay'd his arms upon his knee:
"O wife, what use to answer now?
For now the Priest has judged for
me."
The King was shaken with holy
fear;
"The Gods," he said, "would have
chosen well;
Yet both are near, and both are dear,
And which the dearest I cannot tell!"
But the Priest was happy,
His victim won:
"We have his dearest,
His only son!"

VI.

The rites prepared, the victim bared,
The knife uprising toward the
blow
To the altar-stone she sprang alone,
"Me, not my darling, no!"
He caught her away with a sudden
cry;
Suddenly from him brake his wife,
And shrieking "I am his dearest, I—
I am his dearest!" rush'd on the
knife.
And the Priest was happy,
"O, Father Odin,
We give you a life.
Which was his nearest?
Who was his dearest?
The Gods have answer'd;
We give them the wife!"

WAGES.

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—
 Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she :
 Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death : if the wages of Virtue be dust,
 Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly ?
 She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
 To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky :
 Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

TUE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
 Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns ?

Is not the Vision He ? tho' He be not that which He seems ?
 Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams ?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
 Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him ?

Dark is the world to thee : thyself art the reason why ;
 For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I" ?

Glory about thee, without thee ; and thou fulfillest thy doom
 Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
 Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise ; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
 For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some : no God at all, says the fool ;
 For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool ;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see :
 But if we could see and hear, this Vision — were it not He ?

THE VOICE AND THE PEAK.

I.

THE voice and the Peak
 Far over summit and lawn,
 The lone glow and long roar
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
 of dawn !

II.

All night have I heard the voice
 Rave over the rocky bar,
 But thou wert silent in heaven,
 Above thee glided the star.

III.

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
That standest high above all?
"I am the voice of the Peak,
I roar and rave for I fall.

IV.

"A thousand voices go
To North, South, East, and West;
They leave the heights and are
troubled,
And moan and sink to their rest.

V.

"The fields are fair beside them,
The chestnut towers in his bloom;
But they — they feel the desire of the
deep —
Fall, and follow their doom.

VI.

"The deep has power on the height,
And the height has power on the
deep;
They are raised for ever and ever,
And sink again into sleep."

VII.

Not raised for ever and ever,
But when their cycle is o'er,
The valley, the voice, the peak, the
star
Pass, and are found no more.

VIII.

The Peak is high and flush'd
At his highest with sunrise fire;
The Peak is high, and the stars are
high,
And the thought of a man is higher.

IX.

A deep below the deep,
And a height beyond the height!
Our hearing is not hearing.
And our seeing is not sight.

X.

The voice and the Peak
Far into heaven withdrawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
of dawn!

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my
hand,
Little flower — but if I could under-
stand
What you are, root and all, and all in
all,
I should know what God and man is.

A DEDICATION.

DEAR, near and true — no truer Time
himself
Can prove you, tho' he make you ever-
more
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of
life
Shoots to the fall — take this and pray
that he
Who wrote it, honoring your sweet
faith in him,
May trust himself; and after praise
and scorn,
As one who feels the immeasurable
world,
Attain the wise indifference of the
wise;
And after Autumn past — if left to
pass
His autumn into seeming-leafless
days —
Draw toward the long frost and long-
est night,
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the
fruit
Which in our winter woodland looks
a flower.¹

¹ The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europaeus*).

EXPERIMENTS.

BOÄDICEA.

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries,
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,
 Far in the East Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,
 Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Cámulodúne,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

" They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,
 Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating ?
 Shall I heed them in their anguish ? shall I brook to be supplicated ?
 Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant !
 Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us ?
 Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering ?
 Bark an answer, Britain's raven ! bark and blacken innumerable,
 Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcass a skeleton,
 Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,
 Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.
 Lo their colony half-defended ! low their colony, Cámulodúne !
 There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary,
 There the hive of Roman liars worship a gluttonous emperor-idiot.
 Such is Rome, and this her deity : hear it, Spirit of Cássivélaún !

" Hear it, Gods ! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian !
 Doubt-not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catieuchlanian, Trinobant.
 These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,
 Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aerially,
 Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,
 Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.
 Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men ;
 Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the refluent estuary ;
 Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering —
 There was one who watch'd and told me — down their statue of Victory fell.
 Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony Cámulodúne,
 Shall we teach it a Roman lesson ? shall we care to be pitiful ?
 Shall we deal with it as an infant ? shall we dandle it amorously ?

" Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant !
 While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,
 There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,
 Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses,
 ' Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets !
 Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,
 Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet !

Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,
 Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,
 Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,
 Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God.'
 So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?
 So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

"Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
 Me the wife of rich Prasūtagus, me the lover of liberty,
 Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,
 Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!
 See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!
 Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.
 Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúnē!
 There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,
 Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringleted Britoness —
 Bloodyly, bloodyly fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.
 Shout Icenian, Catieuchlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,
 Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously
 Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirld.
 Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cúnobelínē!
 There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,
 Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.
 There they dwelt and there they rioted; there — there — they dwell no more.
 Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,
 Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,
 Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,
 Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us."

So the Queen Boādiciéa, standing loftily charioted,
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.
 Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.
 So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,
 Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,
 Then her pulses at the clamoring of her enemy fainted away.
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.
 Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, Cámulodúnē.

IN QUANTITY.

ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER.

Hexameters and Pentameters.

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer !
 No — but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England ?
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon ?
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

MILTON.

Alcaics.

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for ages ;
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset —
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
 Where some resplendent sunset of India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately palmwoods
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

Hendecasyllabics.

O YOU chorus of indolent reviewers,
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
 All composed in a metre of Catullus
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,
 Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,

Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
 They should speak to me not without a welcome,
 All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me
 Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers,
 O blatant Magazines, regard me rather —
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —
 As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-like Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE.

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd applause;
 Then loosed their sweating horses from the yoke,
 And each beside his chariot bound his own;
 And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep

In haste they drove, and honey-hearted wine
 And bread from out the houses brought, and heap'd
 Their firewood, and the winds from off the plain
 Roll'd the rich vapor far into the heaven.
 And these all night upon the bridge¹ of war
 Sat glorying; many a fire before them blazed:
 As when in heaven the stars about the moon
 Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
 And every height comes out, and jutting peak

¹ Or ridge.

And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
 Break open to their highest, and all the stars
 Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his heart:
 So many a fire between the ships and stream
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,
 A thousand on the plain; and close by each
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds,
 Fixt by their ears, waited the golden dawn. *Iliad* viii. 542-561.

THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS.

Four years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as "Orpheus with his lute," and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870.

A. TENNYSON.

THE WINDOW.

ON THE HILL.

The lights and shadows fly!
 Yonder it brightens and darkens down
 on the plain.
 A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's eye!
 Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her window pane,
 When the winds are up in the morning?

Clouds that are racing above,
 And winds and lights and shadows
 that cannot be still,
 All running on one way to the home
 of my love,
 You are all running on, and I stand
 on the slope of the hill,
 And the winds are up in the morn-ing!

Follow, follow the chase!
 And my thoughts are as quick and as quick, ever on, on, on.
 O lights, are you flying over her sweet little face?
 And my heart is there before you are come, and gone,
 When the winds are up in the morning!

Follow them down the slope!
 And I follow them down to the window-pane of my dear,
 And it brightens and darkens and brightens like my hope,
 And it darkens and brightens and darkens like my fear,
 And the winds are up in the morning.

AT THE WINDOW.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Clasp her window, trail and twine!
Rose, rose and clematis,
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,
Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?
Rose, rose and clematis,
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,
Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,
Dropt, a flower.

GONE.

Gone!
Gone, till the end of the year,
Gone, and the light gone with her, and
left me in shadow here!
Gone—flitted away,
Taken the stars from the night and
the sun from the day!
Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a
storm in the air!
Flown to the east or the west, flitted
I know not where!
Down in the south is a flash and a
groan: she is there! she is
there!

WINTER.

The frost is here,
And fuel is dear,
And woods are sear,
And fires burn clear,
And frost is here
And has bitten the heel of the going
year.

Bite, frost, bite!
You roll up away from the light
The blue wood-louse, and the plump
dormouse,
And the bees are still'd, and the flies
are kill'd,
And you bite far into the heart of the
house,
But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!
The woods are all the searer,
The fuel is all the dearer,
The fires are all the clearer,
My spring is all the nearer,
You have bitten into the heart of the
earth,
But not into mine.

SPRING.

Birds' love and birds' song
Flying here and there,
Birds' song and birds' love,
And you with gold for hair!
Birds' song and birds' love,
Passing with the weather,
Men's song and men's love,
To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,
And women's love and men's!
And you my wren with a crowa of
gold,
You my queen of the wrens!
You the queen of the wrens—
We'll be birds of a feather,
I'll be King of the Queen of the
wrens,
And all in a nest together.

THE LETTER.

Where is another sweet as my sweet,
Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?
Fine little hands, fine little feet—
Dewy blue eye.
Shall I write to her? shall I go?
Ask her to marry me by and by?
Somebody said that she'd say no;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?
Ay or no, from shy of the shy?
Go, little letter, apace, apace,
Fly;
Fly to the light in the valley below—
Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:
Somebody said that she'd say no;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

NO ANSWER.

The mist and the rain, the mist and
the rain!

Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
And never a glimpse of her window pane!

And I may die but the grass will grow,
And the grass will grow when I am gone,
And the wet west wind and the world will go on.

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,
No is trouble and cloud and storm,
Ay is life for a hundred years,
No will push me down to the worm,
And when I am there and dead and gone,
The wet west wind and the world will go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and the wet!

Wet west wind how you blow, you blow!

And never a line from my lady yet!
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,
The wet west wind and the world may go on.

NO ANSWER.

Winds are loud and you are dumb,
Take my love, for love will come,
Love will come but once a life.
Winds are loud and winds will pass!
Spring is here with leaf and grass:
Take my love and be my wife.
After-loves of maids and men
Are but dainties drest again:
Love me now, you'll love me then:
Love can love but once a life.

THE ANSWER.

Two little hands that meet,
Claspt on her seal, my sweet!
Must I take you and break you,
Two little hands that meet?
I must take you, and break you,
And loving hands must part—
Take, take—break, break—
Break—you may break my heart.
Faint heart never won—
Break, break, and all's done.

AY.

Be merry, all birds, to-day,
Be merry on earth as you never were merry before,
Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far away,
And merry for ever and ever, and one day more.

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.
Look, look, how he flits,
The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,
from out of the pine!
Look how they tumble the blossom,
the mad little tits!
"Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!" was ever a May so fine?

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.
O merry the linnet and dove,
And swallow and sparrow and throstle, and have your desire!
O merry my heart, you have gotten the wings of love,
And flit like the king of the wrens with a crown of fire.

Why?

For its ay ay, ay ay.

WHEN.

Sun comes, moon comes,
Time slips away.
Sun sets, moon sets,
Love, fix a day.

"A year hence, a year hence."

"We shall both be gray."

"A month hence, a month hence."
"Far, far away."

"A week hence, a week hence."

"Ah, the long delay."

"Wait a little, wait a little,
You shall fix a day."

"To-morrow, love, to-morrow,

And that's an age away."

Blaze upon her window, sun,
And honor all the day.

MARRIAGE MORNING.

Light, so low upon earth,
 You send a flash to the sun.
 Here is the golden close of love,
 All my wooing is done.
 Oh, the woods and the meadows,
 Woods where we hid from the wet,
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,
 Meadows in which we met !

Light, so low in the vale
 You flash and lighten afar,
 For this is the golden morning of love,

And you are his morning star.
 Flash, I am coming, I come,
 By meadow and stile and wood,
 Oh, lighten into my eyes and my heart,
 Into my heart and my blood !

Heart, are you great enough
 For a love that never tires ?
 O heart, are you great enough for love ?
 I have heard of thorns and briers,
 Over the thorns and briers,
 Over the meadows and stiles,
 Over the world to the end of it
 Flash for a million miles.



IDYLS OF THE KING.

DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory — since he held
them dear,
Perchance as finding there uncon-
sciously
Some image of himself — I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me
Scarce other than my king's ideal
knight,
“Who reverenced his conscience as
his king;
Whose glory was, redressing human
wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd
to it;
Who loved one only and who clave to
her — ”
Her — over all whose realms to their
last isle,
Commingled with the gloom of im-
minent war,
The shadow of His loss drew like
eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost
him : he is gone :
We know him now: all narrow jeal-
ousies
Are silent; and we see him as he
moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,
wise,
With what sublime repression of him-
self,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;

Not swaying to this faction or to that ;
Not making his high place the lawless
perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-
ground
For pleasure, but thro' all this tract
of years
Wearing the white flower of a blame-
less life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon
a throne,
And blackens every blot: for where
is he,
Who dares foreshadow for an only son
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than
his ?
Or how should England dreaming of
his sons
Hope more for these than some in-
heritance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her
poor —
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler
day —
Far-sighted summoner of War and
Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of
peace —
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious
gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince
indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household
name,

Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's heart, but still endure;
Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,
Remembering all the beauty of that star
Which shone so close beside Thee that ye made
One light together, but has past and leaves
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee,
The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,
The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,
The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,
Till God's love set Thee at his side again!

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard, Had one fair daughter, and none other child; And she was fairest of all flesh on earth, Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

X For many a petty king ere Arthur came Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war Each upon other, wasted all the land; And still from time to time the heathen host Swarml'd overseas, and harried what was left. And so there grew great tracts of wilderness, Wherein the beast was ever more and more, But man was less and less, till Arthur came.

For first Aurelius lived and fought and died, And after him King Uther fought and died, But either fail'd to make the kingdom one. And after these King Arthur for a space, And thro' the puissance of his Table Round, Drew all their petty princedoms under him, Their king and head, and made a realm, and reign'd. X

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste, Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein, And none or few to scare or chase the beast; So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and bear Came night and day, and rooted in the fields, And wallow'd in the gardens of the King. And ever and anon the wolf would steal The children and devour, but now and then, Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat To human sucklings; and the children, housed In her foul den, there at their meat would growl, And mock their foster-mother on four feet, Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men, Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran Groan'd for the Roman legions here again, And Cæsar's eagle: then his brother king, Urien, assail'd him: last a heathen horde, Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood,

And on the spike that split the
mother's heart
Spitting the child, brake on him, till,
amazed,
He knew not whither he should turn
for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly
crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made by
those
Who cried, "He is not Uther's son"
— the King
Sent to him, saying, "Arise, and help
us thou!"
For here between the man and beast
we die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed
of arms,
But heard the call, and came: and
Guinevere
Stood by the castle walls to watch him
pass;
But since he neither wore on helm or
shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his
knights,
And many of these in richer arms
than he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she
saw,
One among many, tho' his face was
bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he
past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and
pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. Then he
drove
The heathen; after, slew the beast,
and fell'd
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and
the knight
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the
hearts

Of those great Lords and Barons of
his realm
Flash'd forth and into war: for most
of these,
Colleaguing with a score of petty
kings,
Made head against him, crying, "Who
is he
That he should rule us? who hath
proven him?
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at
him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs
nor voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom we
knew.
This is the son of Gorlois, not the
King;
This is the son of Anton, not the
King."

And Arthur, passing thence to
battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the
life,
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;
And thinking as he rode, "Her father
said
That there between the man and beast
they die
Shall I not lift her from this land of
beasts
Up to my throne, and side by side
with me?
What happiness to reign a lonely
king,
Next— O ye stars that shudder over
me,
O earth that soundest hollow under
me,
Next with waste dreams? for saving
I be join'd
To her that is the fairest under heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
And cannot will my will, nor work my
work
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own
realm
Victor and lord. But were I join'd
with her,
Then might we live together as one
life,

And reigning with one will in every-
thing
Have power in this dark land to
lighten it,
And power on this dead world to
make it live."

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells
the tale—
When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle
bright
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the
world
Was all so clear about him, that he
saw
The smallest rock far on the faintest
hill,
And even in high day the morning
star.
So when the King had set his banner
broad,
At once from either side, with trumpet-
blast,
And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto
blood,
The long-lanced battle let their horses
run.
And now the Barons and the kings
prevail'd,
And now the King, as here and there
that war
Went swaying; but the Powers who
walk the world
Made lightnings and great thunders
over him,
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by
main might,
And mightier of his hands with every
blow,
And leading all his knighthood threw
the kings
Carádos, Urien, Cradlemont of Wales,
Claudias, and Clariance of Northum-
berland,
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,
And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a
voice
As dreadful as the shout of one who
sees
To one who sins, and deems himself
alone

And all the world asleep, they swerved
and brake
Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the
brands
That hack'd among the flyers, " Ho!
they yield!"
So like a painted battle the war stood
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,
And in the heart of Arthur joy was
lord.
He laugh'd upon his warrior whom
he loved
And honor'd most. + Thou dost not
doubt me King,
So well thine arm hath wrought for
me to-day."
" Sir and my liege," he cried, " the
fire of God
Descends upon thee in the battle-field :
I know thee for my King!" Whereat
the two,
For each had warded either in the
fight,
Swore on the field of death a deathless
love.
And Arthur said, " Man's word is God
in man :
Let chance what will, I trust thee to
the death." X

Then quickly from the foughten
field he sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King Leo-
dogran,
Saying, " If I in aught have served
thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to
wife."

Whom when he heard, Leodogran
in heart
Debating—" How should I that am a
king,
However much he help me at my
need,
Give my one daughter saving to a
king,
And a king's son ? " —lifted his voice,
and call'd
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to
whom

He trusted all things, and of him required
His counsel; "Knowest thou aught of Arthur's birth?"

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and said,
"Sir King, there be but two old men that know:
And each is twice as old as I; and one Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served
King Uther thro' his magic art; and one Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the scholar ran
Before the master, and so far, that Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth."

To whom the King Leodogran replied,
"O friend, had I been holpen half as well
By this King Arthur as by thee today,
Then beast and man had had their share of me:
But summon here before us yet once more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere."

Then, when they came before him, the King said;
"I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser fowl,
And reason in the chase: but wherefore now
Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,

Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son?"

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd,
"Ay."
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning, spake —
For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the King —

"Sir, there be many rumors on this head:
For there be those who hate him in their hearts,
Call him baseborn, and since his ways are sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him less than man:
And there be those who deem him more than man,
And dream he dropt from heaven, but my belief
In all this matter — so ye care to learn —
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time
The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that held
Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne:
And daughters had she borne him, — one whereof,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
To Arthur, — but a son she had not borne.
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love:
But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,
So loathed the bright dishonor of his love,
That Gorlois and King Uther went to war:
And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.
Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged

Ygerne within Tintagil, where her
 men,
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their
 walls,
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,
 And there was none to call to but himself.
 So, compass'd by the power of the
 King,
 Enforced she was to wed him in her
 tears,
 And with a shameful swiftness: after-
 ward,
 Not many moons, King Uther died
 himself,
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to
 rule
 After him, lest the realm should go to
 wrack.
 And that same night, the night of the
 new year,
 By reason of the bitterness and grief
 That vext his mother, all before his
 time
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as
 born
 Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
 To Merlin, to be holden far apart
 Until his hour should come; because
 the lords
 Of that fierce day were as the lords of
 this,
 Wild beasts, and surely would have
 torn the child
 Piecemeal among them, had they
 known; for each
 But sought to rule for his own self
 and hand,
 And many hated Uther for the sake
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took
 the child,
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old
 knight
 And ancient friend of Uther; and his
 wife
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd
 him with her own;
 And no man knew. And ever since
 the lords
 Have foughten like wild beasts among
 themselves,

So that the realm has gone to wrack:
 but now,
 This year, when Merlin (for his hour
 had come)
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in
 the hall,
 Proclaiming, 'Here is Uther's heir,
 your king,'
 A hundred voices cried, 'Away with
 him!
 No king of ours! a son of Gorlois
 he,
 Or else the child of Anton, and no
 king,
 Or else baseborn.' Yet Merlin thro'
 his craft,
 And while the people clamor'd for a
 king,
 Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the
 great lords
 Banded, and so brake out in open
 war."

Then while the King debated with
 himself
 If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after
 death,
 Or Uther's son, and born before his
 time,
 Or whether there were truth in any-
 thing
 Said by these three, there came to
 Cameliard,
 With Gawain and young Modred, her
 two sons,
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
 Bellcient;
 Whom as he could, not as he would,
 the King
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at
 meat,

"A doubtful throne is ice on sum-
 mer seas.
 Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor
 his men
 Report him! Yea, but ye—think ye
 this king—
 So many those that hate him, and so
 strong,

So few his knights, however brave
they be—
Hath body know to hold his foemen
down?"

"O King," she cried, "and I will
tell thee: few,
Few, but all brave, all of one mind
with him;
For I was near him when the savage
yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur
sat
Crown'd on the daïs, and his warriors
cried,
'Be thou the king, and we will work
thy will
Who love thee.' Then the King in
low deep tones,
And simple words of great authority,
Bound them by so strait vows to his
own self,
That when they rose, knighted from
kneeling, some
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one
who wakes
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

"But when he spake and cheer'd
his Table Round
With large divine and comfortable
words
Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I
beheld
From eye to eye thro' all their Order
flash
A momentary likeness of the King:
And ere it left their faces, thro' the
cross
And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur,
smote
Flame-color, vert and azure, in three
rays,
One falling upon each of three fair
queens,
Who stood in silence near his throne,
the friends
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with
bright

Sweet faces, who will help him at his
need?"

"And there I saw mage Merlin,
whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the
hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

"And near him stood the Lady of
the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than his
own—
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful.
She gave the King his huge cross-
hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out: a
mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her
face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster
gloom;
But there was heard among the holy
hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever
storms
May shake the world, and when the
surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like
our Lord.

"There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the
sword
That rose from out the bosom of the
lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it
— rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade
so bright
That men are blinded by it—on one
side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this
world,
'Take me,' but turn the blade and ye
shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak
yourself,

'Cast me away!' And sad was Arthur's face
 Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
 'Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
 Is yet far-off.' So this great brand the king
 Took, and by this will beat his foemen down."

Thereat Leodogram rejoiced, but thought
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,
 Fixing full eyes of question on her face,
 "The swallow and the swift are near akin,
 But thou art closer to this noble prince,
 Being his own dear sister;" and she said,
 "Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I;"
 "And therefore Arthur's sister?" ask'd the King.
 She answer'd, "These be secret things," and sign'd
 To those two sons to pass and let them be.
 And Gawain went, and breaking into song
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw:
 But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,
 And there half-heard; the same that afterward
 Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,
 "What know I?
 For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
 And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark
 Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther too,

Wellnigh to blackness; but this King is fair
 Beyond the race of Britons and of men.
 Moreover, always in my mind I hear
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
 'O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
 To guard thee on the rough ways of the world.'"

"Ay," said the King, "and hear ye such a cry?
 But when did Arthur chance upon thee first?"

"O King!" she cried, "and I will tell thee true:
 He found me first when yet a little maid:
 Beaten I had been for a little fault
 Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran
 And flung myself down on a bank of heath,
 And hated this fair world and all therein,
 And wept, and wish'd that I were dead; and he—
 I know not whether of himself he came,
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can walk
 Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side
 And spake sweet words, and comforted my heart,
 And dried my tears, being a child with me.
 And many a time he came, and evermore
 As I grew greater grew with me; and sad
 At times he seem'd, and sad with him was I,
 Stern too at times, and then I loved him not,
 But sweet again, and then I loved him well.
 And now of late I see him less and less,

But those first days had golden hours
for me,
For then I surely thought he would
be king.

"But let me tell thee now another tale:
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,
To hear him speak before he left his life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage;
And when I enter'd told me that himself
And Merlin ever served about the King,
Uther, before he died; and on the night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
Left the still King, and passing forth to breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
Descending thro' the dismal night—a night
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost—
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks,
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:

And down the wave and in the flame
was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried 'The King!
Here is an heir for Uther!' And the fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
And all at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
Free sky and stars: 'And this same child,' he said,
'Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace
Till this were told.' And saying this the seer
Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,
Not ever to be question'd any more
Save on the further side; but when I met
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth—
The shining dragon and the naked child
Descending in the glory of the seas—
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me
In riddling triplets of old time, and said:
 "Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.
 Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.
 Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows:

Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he
who knows?
From the great deep to the great deep
he goes.'

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me;
but thou
Fear not to give this King thine only
child,
Guinevere: so great bards of him will
sing
Hereafter; and dark sayings from of
old
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds
of men,
And echo'd by old folk beside their
fires
For comfort after their wage-work is
done,
Speak of the King; and Merlin in our
time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and
sworn
Tho' men may wound him that he will
not die,
But pass, again to come; and then or
now
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
Till these and all men hail him for
their king."

She spake and King Leodogran
rejoiced,
But musing "Shall I answer yea or
nay?"
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and
slept, and saw,
Dreaming, a slope of land that ever
grew,
Field after field, up to a height, the
peak
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom
king,
Now looming, and now lost; and on
the slope
The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd
was driven,
Fire glimpsed; and all the land from
roof and rick,
In drifts of smoke before a rolling
wind,

Stream'd to the peak, and mingled
with the haze
And made it thicker; while the phan-
tom king
Sent out at times a voice; and here
or there
Stood one who pointed toward the
voice, the rest
Slew on and burnt, crying, "No king
of ours,
No son of Uther, and no king of ours;"
Till with a wink his dream was
changed, the haze
Descended, and the solid earth be-
came
As nothing, but the King stood out
in heaven,
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and
sent
Ulfus, and Brastias and Bedivere,
Back to the court of Arthur answer-
ing yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior
whom he loved
And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to
ride forth
And bring the Queen; — and watch'd
him from the gates:
And Lancelot past away among the
flowers,
(For then was latter April) and
return'd
Among the flowers, in May, with
Guinevere.
To whom arrived, by Dubric the high
saint,
Chief of the church in Britain, and
before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the
King
That morn was married, while in stain-
less white,
The fair beginners of a nobler time,
And glorying in their vows and him,
his knights
Stood round him, and rejoicing in his
joy.
Far shone the fields of May thro'
open door,
The sacred altar blossom'd white with
May,

The Sun of May descended on their King,
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen,
Roll'd incense, and there past along the hymns
A voice as of the waters, while the two Swore at the shrine of Christ a deathless love :
And Arthur said, "Behold, thy doom is mine.
Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!"
To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,
"King and my lord, I love thee to the death!"
And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,
"Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world
Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,
And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!"

So Dubric said; but when they left the shrine
Great Lords from Rome before the portal stood,
In scornful stillness gazing as they past;
Then while they paced a city all on fire
With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets blew,
And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King :—

"Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May;
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!
Blow thro' the living world—'Let the King reign.'

"Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?
Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon helm,

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

"Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard
That God hath told the King a secret word.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

"Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.
Blow trumpet! live the strength and die the lust!
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,
The King is King, and ever wills the highest.
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"The King will follow Christ, and we the King
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign."

~~T~~ So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.
There at the banquet those great Lords from Rome,
The slowly-fading mistress of the world,
Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as of yore.
But Arthur spake, "Behold, for these have sworn
To wage my wars, and worship me their King;
The old order changeth, yielding place to new;

And we that fight for our fair father
Christ,
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and
old
To drive the heathen from your
Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay": so those
great lords
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur
strode with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for
a space
Were all one will, and thro' that
strength the King
Drew in the petty princedoms under
him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles
overcame
The heathen hordes, and made a realm
and reign'd.

THE ROUND TABLE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

GERAINT AND ENID.

MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

PELLEAS AND ETARRE.

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

GUINEVERE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful
spring
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted
Pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd
away.
" How he went down," said Gareth,
" as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance if lance
Were mine to use — O senseless cata-
ract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —
And yet thou art but swollen with
cold snows
And mine is living blood: thou dost
His will,
The Maker's, and not knewest, and I
that know,
Have strength and wit, in my good
mother's hall
Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and
whistled to —
Since the good mother holds me still
a child!
Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better; yet no worse
would I.

Heaven yield her for it, but in me put
force
To weary her ears with one continuous
prayer,
Until she let me fly discaged to
sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence
swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash
them dead,
A knight of Arthur, working out his
will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain,
when he came
With Modred hither in the summer-
time,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven
knight.
Modred for want of worthier was the
judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he
said,
' Thou hast half prevail'd against me,'
said so — he —
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was
mute,
For he is alway sullen: what care I?"

And Gareth went, and hovering
round her chair

Ask'd, "Mother, tho' ye count me still
the child,
Sweet mother, do ye love the child ?"
She laugh'd,
"Thou art but a wild-goose to ques-
tion it."
"Then, mother, an ye love the child,"
he said,
"Being a goose and rather tame than
wild,
Hear the child's story." "Yea, my
well-beloved,
An 'twere but of goose and golden
eggs."

And Gareth answer'd her with kind-
ling eyes,
"Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg
of mine
Was finer gold than any goose can
lay ;
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a
palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of
Hours.
And there was ever haunting round
the palm
A lusty youth, but poor, who often
saw
The splendor sparkling from aloft,
and thought
'An I could climb and lay my hand
upon it,
Then were I wealthier than a leash of
kings,'
But ever when he reach'd a hand to
climb,
One, that had loved him from his
childhood, caught
And stay'd him, 'Climb not lest thou
break thy neck,
I charge thee by my love,' and so the
boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor
brake his neck,
But brake his very heart in pining
for it,
And past away."

To whom the mother said,
"True love, sweet son, had risk'd him-
self and climb'd,

And handed down the golden treasure
to him."

And Gareth answer'd her with kind-
ling eyes,
"Gold ? said I gold ? — ay then, why
he, or she,
Or whoso'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured — had the thing I spake
of been
Mere gold — but this was all of that
true steel,
Whereof they forged the brand Ex-
calibur,
And lightnings play'd about it in the
storm,
And all the little fowl were flurried
at it,
And there were cries and clashings in
the nest,
That sent him from his senses : let me
go."

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself
and said,
"Hast thou no pity upon my loneli-
ness ?
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the
hearth
Lies like a log, and all but shoul'der'd
out !
For ever since when traitor to the
King
He fought against him in the Barons'
war,
And Arthur gave him back his terri-
tory,
His age hath slowly droopt, and now
lies there
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburia-
ble,
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor
speaks, nor knows.
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's
hall,
Albeit neither loved with that full
love
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a
love :
Stay therefore thou ; red berries charm
the bird,
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts,
the wars,

Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
 Of wrench'd or broken limb — an often chance
 In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,
 Frights to my heart; but stay: follow the deer
 By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;
 So make thy manhood mightier day by day;
 Sweet is the chase: and I will seek thee out
 Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
 Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone year,
 Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
 I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
 Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy than man."

Then Gareth, "An ye hold me yet for child,
 Hear yet once more the story of the child.
 For, mother, there was once a King, like ours.
 The prince his heir, when tall and marriageable,
 Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the King
 Set two before him. One was fair, strong, arm'd —
 But to be won by force — and many men
 Desired her; one, good lack, no man desired.
 And these were the conditions of the King:
 That save he won the first by force, he needs
 Must wed that other, whom no man desired.
 A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile,
 That evermore she long'd to hide herself,
 Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye —

Yea — some she cleaved to, but they died of her.
 And one — they call'd her Fame; and one, — O Mother,
 How can ye keep me tether'd to you — Shame!
 Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
 Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,
 Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King —
 Else, wherefore born?"

To whom the mother said,
 "Sweet son, for there be many who deem him not,
 Or will not deem him, wholly proven King —
 Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King,
 When I was frequent with him in my youth,
 And heard him kingly speak, and doubted him
 No more than he, himself; but felt him mine,
 Of closest kin to me: yet — wilt thou leave
 Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine all,
 Life, limbs, for one that is not proven King?
 Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth
 Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son."

And Gareth answer'd quickly, "Not an hour,
 So that ye yield me — I will walk thro' fire,
 Mother, to gain it — your full leave to go.
 Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome
 From off the threshold of the realm, and crush'd
 The Idolaters, and made the people free?
 Who should be King save him who makes us free?"

So when the Queen, who long had sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
She answer'd craftily, " Will ye walk thro' fire ?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must : only one proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother, — I demand."

And Gareth cried,
" A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay — quick ! the proof to prove me to the quick ! "

But slowly spake the mother looking at him,
" Prinee, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to anyone.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day."

For so the Queen believed that when her son Beheld his only way to glory lead Low down thro' villain kitchen-vas-salage, Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud To pass thereby ; so should he rest with her, Closed in her castle from the sound of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied,

" The thrall in person may be free in soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
And since thou art my mother, must obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will ;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knaves ;
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the King."

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turn'd, Perplexed his outward purpose, till an hour, When waken'd by the wind which with full voice Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn, He rose, and out of slumber calling two That still had tended on him from his birth, Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil. Southward they set their faces. The birds made Melody on branch, and melody in mid air. The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into green, And the live green had kindled into flowers, For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot, Far off they saw the silver-misty morn Rolling her smoke about the Royal mount,

That rose between the forest and the field.
 At times the summit of the high city flash'd ;
 At times the spires and turrets half-way down
 Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone
 Only, that open'd on the field below :
 Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,
 One crying, "Let us go no further, lord.
 Here is a city of Enchanters, built
 By fairy kings." The second echo'd him,
 "Lord, we have heard from our wise man at home
 To Northward, that this King is not the King,
 But only changeling out of Fairy-land,
 Who drove the heathen hence by sorcery
 And Merlin's glamour." Then the first again,
 "Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
 But all a vision."

Gareth answer'd them With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow
 In his own blood, his princedom, youth and hopes,
 To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea ;
 So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.
 And there was no gate like it under heaven.
 For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined
 And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave, The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress
 Wept from her sides as water flowing away ;
 But like the cross her great and goodly arms

Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld :
 And drops of water fell from either hand ;
 And down from one a sword was hung, from one
 A censer, either worn with wind and storm ;
 And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish ;
 And in the space to left of her, and right,
 Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
 New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
 Were nothing, so inveterately, that men
 Were giddy gazing there; and over all
 High on the top were those three Queens, the friends
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a space
 Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd
 The dragon-boughts and elvish emblenings
 Began to move, seethe, twine and curl: they call'd
 To Gareth, "Lord, the gateway is alive."

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his eyes
 So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to move.
 Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
 Back from the gate started the three, to whom
 From out thereunder came an ancient man,
 Long-bearded, saying, "Who be ye, my sons ?"

Then Gareth, "We be tillers of the soil,
 Who leaving share in furrow come to see

The glories of our King: but these,
my men,
(Your city moved so weirdly in the
mist)
Doubt if the King be King at all, or
come
From Fairyland; and whether this
be built
By magic, and by fairy Kings and
Queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision: and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou
these the truth."

Then that old Seer made answer
playing on him
And saying, "Son, I have seen the
good ship sail
Keel upward and mast downward in
the heavens,
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:
And here is truth; but an it please
thee not,
Take thou the truth as thou hast told
it me.
For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King
And Fairy Queens have built the city,
son;
They came from out a sacred mountain-
cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp
in hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.
And as thou sayest it is enchanted,
son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King; tho' some there be
that hold
The King a shadow, and the city real:
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so
thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou
become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the
King
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a
shame
A man should not be bound by, yet
the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread
to swear,

Pass not beneath this gateway, but
abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.
For an ye heard a music, like know
They are building still, seeing the city
is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever.

Gareth spake
Anger'd, "Old Master, reverence thine
own beard
That looks as white as utter truth,
and seems
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured
tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that
hath been
To thee fair-spoken?"

But the Seer replied,
"Know ye not then the Riddling of
the Bards?
Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest
me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not
who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who
thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the
King,
Who cannot brook the shadow of any
lie."

Unmockingly the mocker ending
here
Turn'd to the right, and past along
the plain;
Whom Gareth looking after said, "My
men,
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enter-
prise.
Let love be blamed for it, nor she, nor
I:
Well, we will make amends."

With all good cheer
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd
with his twain

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the
work
Of ancient kings who did their days in
stone;
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at
Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and
everywhere
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening
peak
And pinnacle, and had made it spire
to heaven.
And ever and anon a knight would pass
Outward, or inward to the hall: his
arms
Clash'd; and the sound was good to
Gareth's ear.
And out of bower and casement shyly
glanced
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars
of love;
And all about a healthful people stept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending
heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld
Far over heads in that long-vaulted
hall
The splendor of the presence of the
King
Throned, and delivering doom — and
look'd no more —
But felt his young heart hammering
in his ears,
And thought, "For this half-shadow
of a lie
The truthful King will doom me when
I speak."
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
Of those tall knights, that ranged
about the throne,
Clear honor shining like the dewy star
Of dawn, and faith in their great King,
with pure
Affection, and the light of victory,
And glory gain'd, and evermore to
gain.

Then came a widow crying to the
King,
"A boon, Sir King! Thy father,
Uther, reft
From my dead lord a field with vio-
lence:
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our
eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us
of it
Perforce, and left us neither gold nor
field."

Said Arthur, "Whether would ye?
gold or field?"
To whom the woman weeping, "Nay,
my lord,
The field was pleasant in my hus-
band's eye."

And Arthur, "Have thy pleasant
field again,
And thrice the gold for Uther's use
thereof,
According to the years. No boon is
here,
But justice, so thy say be proven
true.
Accursed, who from the wrongs his
father did
Would shape himself a right!"

And while she past,
Came yet another widow crying to
him,
"A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy,
King, am I.
With thine own hand thou slewest my
dear lord,
A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,
When Lot and many another rose and
fought
Against thee, saying thou wert basely
born.
I held with these, and loathe to ask
thee aught.
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my
son
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved
him dead;
And standeth seized of that inheritance

Which thou that slewest the sire hast
left the son.
So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for
hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle
for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for
my son."

Then strode a good knight forward,
crying to him,
"A boon, Sir King! I am her kins-
man, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay
the man."

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal,
and cried,
"A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou
grant her none,
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in
full hall—
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve
and gag."

But Arthur, "We sit King, to help
the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves
her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves
and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to
the flames,
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged
thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get
thee hence—
Lest that rough humor of the kings of
old
Return upon me! Thou that art her
kin,
Go likewise; lay' him low and slay
him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge
the right,
According to the justice of the King:
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless
King
Who lived and died for men, the man
shall die."

Then came in hall the messenger of
Mark,

A name of evil savor in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he
bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as
shines
A field of charlock in the sudden sun
Between two showers, a cloth of palest
gold,
Which down he laid before the throne,
and knelt,
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal
king,
Was ey'n upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his
grace
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,
knight,
And, for himself was of the greater
state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honor all
the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth
of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth,
to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the
hearth.
An oak-tree shoul'der'd there. "The
goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand
among these?"
For, midway down the side of that long
hall
A stately pile,— whereof along the
front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and
some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony
shields,—
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the
hearth.
And under every shield a knight was
named:
For this was Arthur's custom in his
hall;
When some good knight had done one
noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if
—ain

His arms were blazon'd also; but if none
The shield was blank and bare without a sign
Saving the name beneath; and Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur cried
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

"More like are we to reave him of his crown
Than make him knight because men call him king.
The kings we found, ye know we stay'd their hands
From war among themselves, but left them kings;
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we enroll'd
Among us, and they sit within our hall.
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of king,
As Mark would sully the low state of churl:
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,
Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,
Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,
Silenced for ever—craven—a man of plots,
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings—
No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal
Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied—
Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!"
And many another suppliant crying came
With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,

And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,
Approach'd between them toward the King, and ask'd,
"A boon, Sir King (his voice was all ashamed),
For see ye not how weak and hunger-worn
I seem—leaning on these? grant me to serve
For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves
A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.
Hereafter I will fight."

To him the King,
"A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!
But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,
The master of the meats and drinks, be thine."

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of mien
Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
Root-bitten by white lichen,

"Lo ye now!
This fellow hath broken from some
Abbey, where,
God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,
However that might chance! but an he work,
Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog."

Then Lancelot standing near, "Sir Seneschal,
Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,
and all the hounds;
A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know:

Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair
and fine,
High nose, a nostril large and fine,
and hands
Large, fair and fine!—some young
lad's mystery—
But, or from sheepcot or king's hall,
the boy
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all
grace,
Lest he should come to shame thy
judging of him."

Then Kay, "What murmurrest thou
of mystery?
Think ye this fellow will poison the
King's dish?
Nay, for he spake too fool-like:
mystery!
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had
ask'd
For horse and armor: fair and fine,
forsooth!
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see
thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot,
some fine day
Undo thee not—and leave my man
to me."

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;
Ate with young lads his portion by
the door,
And couch'd at night with grimy
kitchen-knaves.
And Lancelot ever spake him please-
antly,
But Kay the seneschal who loved him
not
Would hustle and harry him, and
labor him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth,
and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or
hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd
himself
With all obedience to the King, and
wrought
All kind of service with a noble
ease

That graced the lowliest act in doing
it.
And when the thralls had talk among
themselves,
And one would praise the love that
linkt the King
And Lancelot—how the King had
saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the
King's—
For Lancelot was the first in Tourna-
ment,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-
field—
Gareth was glad. Or if some other
told,
How once the wandering forester at
dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy
seas,
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the
King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet
spake,
"He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot
die"—
Gareth was glad. But if their talk
were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any
lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so
loud
That first they mock'd, but, after,
reverenced him.
Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale
Of knights, who sliced a red life-bub-
bling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon,
held
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good
mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,
would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden
wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them
all apart.
Or when the thralls had sport among
themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,

He, by two yards in casting bar or
stone
Was counted best; and if there
chanced a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to
go,
Would hurry thither, and when he
saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring
wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse
reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among
the thralls;
But in the weeks that follow'd, the
good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him
swear,
And saddening in her childless castle,
sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-cres-
cent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him from
his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire
of Lot
With whom he used to play at tourney
onee,
When both were children, and in
lonely haunts
Would scratch a ragged oval on the
sand,
And each at either dash from either
end—
Shame never made girl redder than
Gareth joy.
He laugh'd; he sprang. "Out of the
smoke, at once
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's
knee—
These news be mine, none other's—
nay, the King's—
Descent into the city :" whereon he
sought
The King alone, and found, and told
him all.

"I have stagger'd thy strong Ga-
wain in a tilt

For pastime; yea, he said it: joust
can I.
Make me thy knight—in secret! let
my name
Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest,
I spring
Like flame from ashes."

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and cheek'd, and made him
flush, and bow
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd
him,
"Son, the good mother let me know
thee here,
And sent her wish that I would yield
thee thine.
Make thee my knight? my knights
are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King."

Then Gareth, lightly springing from
his knees,
"My King, for hardihood I can prom-
ise thee.
For uttermost obedience make de-
mand
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and
drinks!
And as for love, God wot, I love not
yet,
But love I shall, God willing."

And the King—
"Make thee my knight in secret? yea,
but he,
Our noblest brother, and our truest
man,
And one with me in all, he needs
must know."

"Let Lancelot know, my King, let
Lancelot know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!"

And the King—
"But wherefore would ye men should
wonder at you?"

Nay, rather for the sake of me, their
King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood
do the deed,
Than to be noised of."

Merrily Gareth ask'd,
"Have I not earn'd my cake in baking
of it?
Let be my name until I make my
name!
My deeds will speak: it is but for a
day."
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's
arm
Smiled the great King, and half-
unwillingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded
to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot
privily,
"I have given him the first quest: he
is not proven.
Look therefore when he calls for this
in hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far
away.
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en
nor slain."

Then that same day there past into
the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-
blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slen-
der nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;
She into hall past with her page and
cried,

"O King, for thou hast driven the
foe without,
See to the foe within! bridge, ford,
beset
By bandits, everyone that owns a
tower
The Lord for half a league. Why sit
ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were
king,

Till ev'n the loneliest hold were all as
free
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-
cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to
spill."

"Comfort thyself," said Arthur, "I
nor mine
Rest: so my knighthood keep the
vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm
shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?"

" My name? " she said —
" Lynette my name; noble; my need,
a knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than
myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living-
place;
And o'er it are three passings, and
three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a
fourth
And of that four the mightiest, holds
her stay'd
In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed
with him:
And but delays his purport till thou
send
To do the battle with him, thy chief
man
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to over-
throw,
Then wed, with glory: but she will
not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for
Lancelot."

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth
ask'd,
" Damsel, ye know this Order lives to
crush

All wrongers of the Realm. But say,
these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of
the men?"

"They be of foolish fashion, O Sir
King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad and do but what
they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment,
such
As have nor law nor king; and three
of these
Proud in their fantasy call themselves
the Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and
Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit
more wise
The fourth who alway rideth arm'd
in black,
A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
He names himself the Night, and
oftener Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a
skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his
arms,
To show that who may slay or scape
the three
Slain by himself shall enter endless
night.
And all these four be fools, but mighty
men,
And therefore am I come for Lance-
lot."

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where
he rose,
A head with kindling eyes above the
throng,
"A boon, Sir King — this quest!"
then — for he mark'd
Kay near him groaning like a wounded
bull —
"Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-
knaves am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks
am I,

And I can topple over a hundred such,
Thy promise, King," and Arthur glanc-
ing at him,
Brought down a momentary brow.
"Rough, sudden,
And pardonable, worthy to be knight—
Go, therefore," and all hearers were
amazed.

But on the damsels's forehead shame,
pride, wrath
Slew the May-white: she lifted either
arm,
"Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy
chief knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-
knaver."
Then ere a man in hall could stay her,
turn'd,
Fled down the lane of access to the
King,
Took horse, descended the slope street,
and past
The weird white gate, and paused with-
out, beside
The field of tourney, murmuring
"kitchen-knave."

Now two great entries open'd from
the hall,
At one end one, that gave upon a
range
Of level pavement where the King
would pace
At sunrise, gazing over plain and
wood;
And down from this a lordly stairway
sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of
towers;
And out by this main doorway past
the King.
But one was counter to the hearth,
and rose
High that the highest-crested helm
could ride
Therethro' nor graze: and by this entry
fled
The damsels in her wrath, and on to
this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without
the door

King Arthur's gift, the worth of half
a town,
A warhorse of the best, and near it
stood
The two that out of north had fol-
low'd him :
This bare a maiden shield, a casque ;
that held
The horse, the spear ; whereat Sir
Gareth loosed
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone
to heel,
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it
down,
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and
flash'd as those
Dull-coated things, that making slide
apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath
there burns
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and
fly.
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in
arms.
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took
the shield
And mounted horse and graspt a
spear, of grain
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site,
and tipt
With trenchant steel, around him
slowly prest
The people, while from out of kitchen
came
The thralls it throng, and seeing who
had work'd
Lustier than any, and whom they could
but love,
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps
and cried,
"God bless the King, and all his
fellowship !"
And on thro' launes of shouting Gareth
rode
Down the slope street, and past with-
out the gate.

So Gareth past with joy ; but as the
cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with,
ere his cause

Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being
named,
His owner, but remembers all, and
growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the
door
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he
used
To harry and hustle.

" Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms — the King hath
past his time —
My scullion knave ! Thralls to your
work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle
mine !
Will there be dawn in West and eve
in East ?
Begone ! — my knave ! — belike and
like enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his
youth
So shook his wits they wander in his
prime —
Crazed ! how the villain lifted up his
voice,
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-
knavе.
Tut : he was tame and meek enow with
me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's
noticing.
Well — I will after my loud knave,
and learn
Whether he know me for his master
yet.
Out of the smoke he came, and so my
lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into
the mire —
Thence, if the King awaken from his
craze,
Into the smoke again."

But Lancelot said,
" Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against
the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in
thee ?
Abide : take counsel ; for this lad is
great

And lusty, and knowing both of lance
and sword."

"Tut, tell not me," said Kay, "ye are
overfine
To mar stout knaves with foolish
courtesies!"

Then mounted, on thro' silent faces
rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond
the gate.

But by the field of tourney linger-
ing yet
Mutter'd the damsels, " Wherefore did
the King
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot
lackt, at least
He might have yielded to me one of
those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory
here,
Rather than — O sweet heaven! O
fie upon him —
His kitchen-knave."

To whom Sir Gareth drew
(And there were none but few goodlier
than he)
Shining in arms, " Damsel, the quest
is mine.
Lead, and I follow." She thereat, as
one
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the
holts,
And deems it carrion of some wood-
land thing,
Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender
nose
With petulant thumb and finger,
shrililing, " Hence!
Avoid, thou smeltest all of kitchen-
grease.
And look who comes behind," for
there was Kay.
" Knowest thou not me? thy master?
I am Kay.
We lack thee by the hearth."

And Gareth to him,
" Master no more! too well I know
thee, ay —

The most ungentle knight in Arthur's
hall."
" Have at thee then," said Kay: they
shock'd, and Kay
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried
again,
" Lead, and I follow," and fast away
she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to
fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good
horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the
beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken
spoke.

" What doest thou, scullion, in my
fellowship?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught
the more
Or love thee better, that by some
device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappi-
ness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy
master — thou! —
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!
— to me
Thou smeltest all of kitchen as be-
fore."

" Damsel," Sir Gareth answer'd
gently, " say
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye
say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefore."

" Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he
talks!
The listening rogue hath caught the
manner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met
with, knave,
And then by such a one that thou for
all
The kitchen brewis that was eversupt
Shalt not once dare to look him in the
face."

"I shall assay," said Gareth with a smile
 That madden'd her, and away she flash'd again
 Down the long avenues of a boundless wood,
 And Gareth following was again beknaved.

"Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the only way
 Where Arthur's men are set along the wood;
 The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves:
 If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,
 Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine?
 Fight, an thou canst: I have miss'd the only way."

So till the dusk that follow'd even-song
 Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
 Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,
 Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand pines
 A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
 To westward — in the deeps whereof a mere,
 Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,
 Under the half-dead sunset glared;
 Ascended, and there brake a serving-man
 Flying from out the black wood, and crying,
 "They have bound my lord to cast him in the mere."
 Then Gareth, "Bound am I to right the wrong'd,
 But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee."
 And when the damsel spake contemptuously,
 "Lead, and I follow," Gareth cried again,
 "Follow, I lead!" so down among the pines

He plunged; and there, blackshadow'd nigh the mere,
 And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
 Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
 A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
 Three with good blows he quieted, but three
 Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone
 From off his neck, then in the mere beside
 Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.
 Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet
 Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

"Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues
 Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs
 To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
 To catch my thief, and then like vermin here
 Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;
 And under this wan water many of them
 Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
 And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
 Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life
 Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.
 And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
 What guerdon will ye?"

Gareth sharply spake,
 "None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,
 In uttermost obedience to the King.
 But wilt thou yield this damsel harborage?"

Whereat the Baron saying, "I well believe
You be of Arthur's Table," a light laugh
Broke from Lynette, "Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave! —
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay — for thou smellest of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harborage,
Well."

So she spake. A leugue beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers where that day a feast had been
Held in high wall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly eate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the Baron set
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

"Meseems, that here is much dis-courtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot
To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night —
The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd —
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,

'The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I.'
Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
'Go therefore,' and so gives the quest to him —
Him — here — a villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord
Now look'd at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board, Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

"Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And saver of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The saver of my life."

And Gareth said,
"Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell."

So when, next morn, the lord whose
life he saved
Had, some brief space, convey'd them
on their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir
Gareth spake,
"Lead, and I follow." Haughtily she
replied,

"I fly no more: I allow thee for an
hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together,
knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore,
methinks
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back
wilt thou, fool?
For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee: then will I to court
again,
And shame the King for only yielding
me
My champion from the ashes of his
hearth."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously,
"Say thou thy say, and I will do my
deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou
wilt find
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the
King's son."

Then to the shore of one of those
long loops
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd,
they came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and
steep; the stream
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single
are
Took at a leap; and on the further
side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily
in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and
above,
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.

And therebefore the lawless warrior
paced
Unarm'd, and calling, "Damsel, is
this he,
The champion thou hast brought from
Arthur's hall?
For whom we let thee pass." "Nay,
nay," she said,
"Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter
scorn
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent
thee here
His kitchen-knave: and look thou to
thyself:
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd: he is not
knight but knave."

Then at his call, "O daughters of
the Dawn,
And servants of the Morning-Star,
approach,
Arm me," from out the silken curtain-folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three
fair girls
In gilt and rosy raiment came: their
feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the
hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or with
gem
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
These arm'd him in blue arms, and
gave a shield
Blue also, and thereon the morning
star.
And Gareth silent gazed upon the
knight,
Who stood a moment ere his horse
was brought,
Glorying; and in the stream beneath
him, shone
Immingled with Heaven's azure wav-
eringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked
feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the
star.

Then she that watch'd him,
"Wherefore star ye so?

Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is time:
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave."

Said Gareth, "Damsel, whether knave or knight,
Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;
But truly foul are better, for they send
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I know
That I shall overthrow him."

And he that bore
The star, being mounted, cried from o'er the bridge,
"A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn
of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn
with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse
And arms, and so return him to the King.
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,
knave.
Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady."

"Dog, thou liest.
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own."
He spake, and all at fiery speed the two
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,

Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand
He drove his enemy backward down the bridge,
The damsel crying, "Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!"
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, "Take not my life: I yield."
And Gareth, "So this damsel ask it of me
Good—I accord it easily as a grace."
She redening, "Insolent scullion: I of thee?
I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!"
"Then shall he die." And Gareth there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,
"Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself." "Damsel, thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me, Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command.
Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall,
and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee.
See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.
Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.
Thy shield is mine—farewell; and, damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow."

And fast away she fled.
Then when he came upon her, spake,
"Methought,
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking
on the bridge
The savor of thy kitchen came upon me

A little faintlier: but the wind hath changed:
I scent it twenty-fold." And then she sang,
"O morning star" (not that tall felon there
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),
"O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me."

"But thou begone, take counsel, and away,
For hard by here is one that guards a ford—
The second brother in their fool's parable—
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame: thou art not knight but knave."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laughingly,
"Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-mates
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his coat,
'Guard it,' and there was none to meddle with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,
To worry, and not to flee—and—a knight or knave—
The knave that doth thee service as full knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing."

"Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a knight,

Being but knave, I hate thee all the more."

"Fair damsel, you should worship me the more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine enemies."

"Ay, ay," she said, "but thou shalt meet thy match."

So when they touch'd the second river-loop,
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noon-day Sun
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower,
That blows a globe of after arrowlets, Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watching him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
"What doest thou, brother, in my marches here?"
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
"Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms."
"Ugh!" cried the Sun, and vizoring up a red
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,
Whom Gareth met midstream: no room was there
For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes they struck
With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,

The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;
So drew him home; but he that fought no more,
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock, Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.
"Myself when I return will plead for thee."
"Lead, and I follow." Quietly she led.
"Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?"
"Nay, not a point: nor art thou victor here.
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for I saw it.

"O Sun' (not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave, Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),
"O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."

"What knowest thou of lovesong or of love?
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance,—

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."

"What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,

To garnish meats with? hath not our good King Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom, A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head? Flowers? nay, the boar hath rose-maries and bay.

"O birds, that warble to the morning sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."

"What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis, merle, Linnet? what dream ye when they utter forth May-music growing with the growing light, Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the snare (So runs thy fancy) these be for the spit, Larding and basting. See thou have not now Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly. There stands the third fool of their allegory."

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,
All in a rose-red from the west, and all Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad Deep-dimpled current underneath, the knight, That named himself the Star of Evening, stood.

And Gareth, "Wherfore waits the madman there Naked in open dayshine?" "Nay," she cried, "Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins

That fit him like his own; and so ye
cleave
His armor off him, these will turn the
blade."

Then the third brother shouted o'er
the bridge,
"O brother-star, why shine ye here so
low?
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye
slain
The damsel's champion?" and the
damsel cried,

"No star of thine, but shot from
Arthur's heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee!
For both thy younger brethren have
gone down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou,
Sir Star;
Art thou not old?"

"Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of
twenty boys."
Said Gareth, "Old, and over-bold in
brag!
But that same strength which threw
the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening."

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
"Approach and arm me!" With slow
steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-
stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel
came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and
brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the Star of
Even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his
emblem, shone.
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-
bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the
bridge;

And Gareth overthrew him, lighted,
drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew
him again,
But up like fire he started: and as
oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on
his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth pant'd hard, and his great
heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in
vain,
Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as
one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and
cry,
"Thou hast made us lords, and canst
not put us down!"
He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to
strike
Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the
while,
"Well done, knave-knight, well
stricken, O good knight-
knavé—
O knave, as noble as any of all the
knights—
Shame me not, shame me not. I have
prophesied—
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table
Round—
His arms are old, he trusts the hard-
en'd skin—
Strike—strike—the wind will never
change again."
And Gareth hearing ever stronglier
smote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armor
off him;
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd
skin,
And could not wholly bring him
under, more
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling
ridge on ridge,
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips
and springs
For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's
brand

Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.
 "I have thee now;" but forth that other sprang.
 And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms
 Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
 Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost
 Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge
 Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
 "Lead, and I follow."

But the damsel said,
 "I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
 Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
 O rainbow with three colors after rain,
 Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled on me.'

"Sjr,—and, good faith, I fain had added—Knight,
 But that I heard thee call thyself a knave,—
 Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
 Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the King
 Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,
 For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
 And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal
 As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
 Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art.

"Damsel," he said, "you be not all to blame,
 Saving that you mistrusted our good King

Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one
 Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;
 Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold
 He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness. Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me:
 And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks
 There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,
 Hath force to quell me."

Nigh upon that hour
 When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,
 Lets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams
 Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
 Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,
 And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
 Where bread and baken meats and good red wine
 Of Southland, which the Lady Lygnors
 Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
 Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse
 Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.
 "Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,
 Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock
 The war of Time against the soul of man.
 And yon four fools have suck'd their allegory

From these damp walls, and taken
but the form.
Know ye not these?" and Gareth
lookt and read—
In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the stream-
ing Gelt—
"PHOSPHORUS," then "MERIDIES"—
"HESPERUS"—
"Nox"—"MORS," beneath five fig-
ures, armed men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward
all,
And running down the Soul, a Shape
that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment and
loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's
cave.
"Follow the faces, and we find it.
Look,
Who comes behind?"

For one — delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter
chanced,
The damsels's headlong error thro' the
wood—
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-
loops—
His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly
drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw
the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to
him, cried,
"Stay, felon-knight, I avenge me for
my friend."
And Gareth crying prick'd against the
cry;
But when they closed—in a moment
—at one touch
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of
the world—
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within
his hands
He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon
Lynette:
Harshly she ask'd him, "Shamed and
overthrown,

And tumbled back into the kitchen-
knav,
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your
boast in vain?"
"Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the
son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Bel-
licent,
And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown
by whom
I know not, all thro' mere unhap-
piness—
Device and sorcery and unhap-
piness—
Out, sword; we are thrown!" And
Lancelot answer'd, "Prince,
O Gareth—thro' the mere unhap-
piness
Of one who came to help thee, not to
harm,
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee
whole,
As on the day when Arthur knighted
him."

Then Gareth, "Thou—Lancelot!
—thine the hand
That threw me? An some chance to
mar the boast
Thy brethren of thee make—which
could not chance—
Had sent thee down before a lesser
spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad—O
Lancelot—thou!"

Whereat the maiden, petulant,
"Lancelot,
Why came ye not, when call'd? and
wherefore now
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my
knav.
Who being still rebuked, would answer
still
Courteous as any knight—but now,
if knight,
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd
and trick'd,
And only wondering wherefore play'd
upon:

And doubtful whether I and mine be
scorn'd.
Where should be truth if not in
Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight,
knaver, prince and fool,
I hate thee and for ever."

And Lancelot said,
"Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight
art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel,
be you wise
To call him shamed, who is but over-
thrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but
many a time.
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the
last,
And overthower from being over-
thrown.
With sword we have not striven; and
thy good horse
And thou are weary; yet not less I
felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance
of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the
stream is freed,
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on
his foes,
And when reviled, hast answer'd
graciously,
And makest merry when overthrown.
Prince, Knight,
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our
Table Round!"

And then when turning to Lynette
he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she
said,
"Ay well—ay well—for worse than
being fool'd
Of others, is to fool one's self. A
cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats
and drinks
And forage for the horse, and flint for
fire.

But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find." And when they
sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his
life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden
gazed.
"Sound sleep be thine! sound cause
to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! seem I not as tender to
him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her
child,
And vext his day, but blesses him
asleep—
Good lord, how sweetly smells the
honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world
were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentle-
ness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot"—and she
clapt her hands—
"Full merry am I to find my goodly
knaver
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn
have I,
Else yon black felon had not let me
pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle
with him.
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee
first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my
knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accom-
plishment."

Said Lancelot, "Peradventure he,
you name,
May know my shield. Let Gareth,
an he will,
Change his for mine, and take my
charger, fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as
well
As he that rides him." "Lancelot-
like," she said,
"Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as
in all."

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely
clutch'd the shield;
"Ramp ye lance-splintering lions, on
whom all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to
roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your
lord! —
Care not, good beasts, so well I care
for you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on
these
Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that
will not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under
shield.
Hence : let us go."

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's harp tho'
summer-wan,
In counter motion to the clouds,
allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on
his liege.
A star shot: "Lo," said Gareth, "the
foe falls!"
An owl whoopt: "Hark the victor
pealing there!"
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent
him, crying,
"Yield, yield him this again: 'tis he
must fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yes-
terday
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on
Lancelot now
To lend thee horse and shield: won-
ders ye have done;
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow
In having flung the three: I see thee
maim'd,
Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling
the fourth."

"And wherefore, damsel? tell me
all ye know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough face,
or voice,
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless
savagery
Appal me from the quest."

"Nay, Princee," she cried,
"God wot, I never look'd upon the
face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by
day;
But watch'd him have I like a phan-
tom pass
Chilling the night: nor have I heard
the voice.
Always he made his mouthpiece of a
page
Who came and went, and still re-
ported him
As closing in himself the strength of
ten,
And when his anger tare him, mas-
sacring
Man, woman, lad and girl — yea, the
soft babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd
infant flesh,
Monster! O Prince, I went for Lance-
lot first,
The quest is Lancelot's: give him
back the shield."

Said Gareth laughing, "An he fight
for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man:
Thus — and not else!"

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than
himself;
How best to manage horse, lance,
sword and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force
might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant were
his words.

Then Gareth, "Here be rules. I
know but one —
To dash against mine enemy and to
win.
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the
joust,
And seen thy way." "Heaven help
thee," sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud
that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars,
they rode.
In converse till she made her palfrey
halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,
"There."
And all the three were silent seeing,
pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the
marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long
black horn
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth
graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder
him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all
the horn.
Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled;
anon
Came lights and lights, and once again
he blew;
Whereon were hollow tramplings up
and down
And muffled voices heard, and shadows
past;
Till high above him, circled with her
maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving to
him
White hands, and courtesy; but when
the Prince
Three times had blown — after long
hush — at last —
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which
housed therein.
High on a nightblack horse, in night-
black arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren
ribs of Death,
And crown'd with fleshless laughter —
some ten steps —
In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn
— advanced
The monster, and then paused, and
spake no word

But Gareth spake and all indig-
nantly,
"Fool, for thou hast, men say, the
strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy
God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee
more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with,
and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with
mantling flowers
As if for pity?" But he spake no
word;
Which set the horror higher; a maiden
swoon'd;
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands
and wept,
As doom'd to be the bride of Night
and Death;
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his
helm;
And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm
blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him
were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger
fiercely neigh'd,
And Death's dark war-horse bounded
forward with him.
Then those that did not blink the
terror, saw
That Death was cast to ground, and
slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split
the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and
lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove
the helm
As throughly as the skull; and out
from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming
boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,
"Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bade
me do it,
To make a horror all about the
house,

And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.

They never dream'd the passes would be past."

Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, " My fair child,

What madness made thee challenge the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?" " Fair Sir, they bade me do it.

They hate the King, and Lancelot, the King's friend,

They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,

They never dream'd the passes could be past."

Then sprang the happier day from underground;

And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance

And revel and song, made merry over Death,

As being after all their foolish fears And horrors only proven a blooming boy.

So large mirth lived and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times

Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors, But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

GERAINT AND ENID.

I.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,

A tributary prince of Devon, one Of that great Order of the Table Round,

Had married Enid, Yniol's only child, And loved her, as he loved the light of Heaven.

And as the light of Heaven varies, now At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night

With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint

To make her beauty vary day by day, In crimsons and in purples and in gems.

And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,

Who first had found and loved her in a state

Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him

In some fresh splendor; and the Queen herself,

Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,

Loved her, and often with her own white hands

Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,

Next after her own self, in all the court.

And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart

Adored her, as the stateliest and the best

And loveliest of all women upon earth.

And seeing them so tender and so close,

Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.

But when a rumor rose about the Queen,

Touching her guilty love for Lancelot, Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard

The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,

Not less Geraint believed it; and there fell

A horror on him, lest his gentle wife, Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,

Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint

In nature: wherefore going to the King,

He made this pretext, that his principedom lay

Close on the borders of a territory, Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,

Assassins, and all flyers from the hand Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law:

And therefore, till the King himself
should please
To cleanse this common sewer of all
his realm,
He craved a fair permission to depart,
And there defend his marches; and
the King
Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,
And fifty knights rode with them, to
the shores
Of Severn, and they past to their own
land;
Where, thinking, that if ever yet was
wife
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,
He compass'd her with sweet observ-
ances
And worship, never leaving her, and grew
Forgetful of his promise to the King,
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
Forgetful of his glory and his name,
Forgetful of his princedom and its
cares.
And this forgetfulness was hateful to
her.
And by and by the people, when they
met
In twos and threes, or fuller compa-
nies,
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of
him
As of a prince whose manhood was all
gone,
And molten down in mere uxorious-
ness.
And this she gather'd from the peo-
ple's eyes:
This too the women who attired her
head,
To please her, dwelling on his bound-
less love,
Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the
more:
And day by day she thought to tell
Geraint,
But could not out of bashful delicacy;
While he that watch'd her sadden, was
the more
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer
morn
(They sleeping each by either) the
new sun
Beat thro' the blindless casement of
the room,
And heated the strong warrior in his
dreams;
Who, moving, cast the coverlet
aside,
And bared the knotted column of his
throat,
The massive square of his heroic
breast,
And arms on which the standing
muscle sloped,
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little
stone,
Running too vehemently to break
upon it.
And Enid woke and sat beside the
couch,
Admiring him, and thought within
herself,
Was ever man so grandly made as
he?
Then, like a shadow, past the people's
talk.
And accusation of uxoriousness
Across her mind, and bowing over
him,
Low to her own heart piteously she
said:
"O noble breast and all-puissant
arms,
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that
men
Reproach you, saying all your force
is gone?
I am the cause, because I dare not
speak
And tell him what I think and what
they say.
And yet I hate that he should linger
here;
I cannot love my lord and not his
name.
Far liefer had I gird his harness on
him,
And ride with him to battle and stand
by,

And watch his mighty hand striking
great blows
At caitiffs and at wrongers of the
world.
Far better were I laid in the dark
earth,
Not hearing any more his noble voice,
Not to be folded more in these dear
arms,
And darken'd from the high light in
his eyes,
Than that my lord thro' me should
suffer shame.
Am I so bold, and could I so stand
by,
And see my dear lord wounded in the
strife,
Or maybe pierced to death before
mine eyes,
And yet not dare to tell him what I
think,
And how men slur him, saying all his
force
Is melted into mere effeminacy ?
O me, I fear that I am no true wife."

Half inwardly, half audibly she
spoke,
And the strong passion in her made
her weep
True tears upon his broad and naked
breast,
And these awoke him, and by great
mischance
He heard but fragments of her later
words,
And that she fear'd she was not a true
wife.
And then he thought, " In spite of all
my care,
For all my pains, poor man, for all
my pains,
She is not faithful to me, and I see her
Weeping for some gay knight in
Arthur's hall."
Then tho' he loved and reverenced
her too much
To dream she could be guilty of foul
act,
Right thro' his manful breast darted
the pang

That makes a man, in the sweet face
of her
Whom he loves most, lonely and mis-
erable.
At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out
of bed,
And shook his drowsy squire awake
and cried,
" My charger and her palfrey ; " then
to her,
" I will ride forth into the wilderness ;
For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to
win,
I have not fall'n so low as some would
wish.
And thou, put on thy worst and mean-
est dress
And ride with me." And Enid ask'd,
amazed,
" If Enid errs, let Enid learn her
fault."
But he, " I charge thee, ask not, but
obey."
Then she bethought her of a faded
silk,
A faded mantle and a faded veil,
And moving toward a cedar cabinet,
Wherein she kept them folded rever-
ently
With sprigs of summer laid between
the folds,
She took them, and array'd herself
therein,
Remembering when first he came on
her
Drest in that dress, and how he loved
her in it,
And all her foolish fears about the
dress,
And all his journey to her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the
court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide
before
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.
There on a day, he sitting high in
hall,
Before him came a forester of Dean,
Wet from the woods, with notice of a
hart

Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,
 First seen that day: these things he told the King.
 Then the good King gave order to let blow
 His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.
 And when the Queen petition'd for his leave
 To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.
 So with the morning all the court were gone.
 But Guinevere lay late into the morn,
 Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love
 For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt;
 But rose at last, a single maiden with her,
 Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the wood;
 There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd
 Waiting to hear the hounds; but heard instead
 A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,
 Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress
 Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,
 Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow ford
 Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.
 A purple scarf, at either end whereof
 There swung an apple of the purest gold,
 Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up
 To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly
 In summer suit and silks of holiday.
 Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,
 Sweetly and stately, and with all grace
 Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd him:
 "Late, late, Sir Prince," she said,
 "later than we!"

"Yea, noble Queen," he answer'd,
 "and so late
 That I but come like you to see the hunt,
 Not join it." "Therefore wait with me," she said;
 "For on this little knoll, if anywhere,
 There is good chance that we shall hear the hounds:
 Here often they break covert at our feet."

And while they listen'd for the distant hunt,
 And chiefly for the baying of Cavall, King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there rode
 Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;
 Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the knight
 Had vizor up, and show'd a youthful face,
 Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.
 And Guinevere, not mindful of his face
 In the King's hall, desired his name, and sent
 Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf;
 Who being vicious, old and irritable,
 And doubling all his master's vice of pride,
 Made answer sharply that she should not know.
 "Then will I ask it of himself," she said.
 "Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not," cried the dwarf;
 "Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him;"
 And when she put her horse toward the knight,
 Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd
 Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint
 Exclaiming, "Surely I will learn the name,"
 Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,



*"Beheld the long street of a little town
In a long valley, on one side whereof,
White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose."*

GERAINT AND ENID.



Who answer'd as before; and when
the Prince
Had put his horse in motion toward
the knight,
Struck at him with his whip, and cut
his cheek.
The Prince's blood spirted upon the
scarf,
Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive
hand
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:
But he, from his exceeding manful-
ness
And pure nobility of temperament,
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,
refrain'd
From ev'n a word, and so returning
said:

"I will avenge this insult, noble
Queen,"
Done in your maiden's person to your-
self:
And I will track this vermin to their
earths:
For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt
To find, at some place I shall come at,
arms
On loan, or else for pledge; and, being
found,
Then will I fight him, and will break
his pride,
And on the third day will again be
here,
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Fare-
well."

"Farewell, fair Prince," answer'd
the stately Queen.
"Be prosperous in this journey, as in
all;
And may you light on all things that
you love,
And live to wed with her whom first
you love:
But ere you wed with any, bring your
bride,
And I, were she the daughter of a
king,
Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the
hedge,
Will clothe her for her bridals like
the sun."

And Prince Geraint, now thinking
that he heard
The noble hart at bay, now the far
horn,
A little vext at losing of the hunt,
A little at the vile occasion, rode,
By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy
glade
And valley, with fixt eye following
the three.
At last they issued from the world of
wood,
And climb'd upon a fair and even
ridge,
And show'd themselves against the
sky, and sank.
And thither came Geraint, and under-
neath
Beheld the long street of a little town
In a long valley, on one side
whereof,
White from the mason's hand, a for-
tress rose;
And on one side a castle in decay,
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry
ravine:
And out of town and valley came a
noise
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed
Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks
At distance, ere they settle for the
night.

And onward to the fortress rode the
three,
And enter'd, and were lost behind the
walls.
"So," thought Geraint, "I have
track'd him to his earth."
And down the long street riding
wearily,
Found every hostel full, and every-
where
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the
hot hiss
And bustling whistle of the youth
who scour'd
His master's armor; and of such a
one
He ask'd, "What means the tumult
in the town?"

Who told him, scouring still, "The sparrow-hawk!"
 Then riding close behind an ancient churl,
 Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,
 Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,
 Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub here?
 Who answer'd gruffly, "Ugh! the sparrow-hawk."
 Then riding further past an armorer's,
 Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his work,
 Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,
 He put the self-same query, but the man
 Not turning round, nor looking at him, said:
 "Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-hawk
 Has little time for idle questioners."
 Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen:
 "A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!
 Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead!
 Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg
 The murmur of the world! What is it to me?
 O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,
 Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!
 Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad,
 Where can I get me harborage for the night?
 And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy? Speak!"
 Whereat the armorer turning all amazed
 And seeing one so gay in purple silks,
 Came forward with the helmet yet in hand
 And answer'd, "Pardon me, O stranger knight;
 We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,

And there is scanty time for half the work.
 Arms? truth! I know not: all are wanted here.
 Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,
 It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge
 Yonder." He spoke and fell to work again.
 Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,
 Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.
 There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,
 (His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,
 Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said:
 "Whither, fair son?" to whom Geraint replied,
 "O friend, I seek a harborage for the night."
 Then Yniol, "Enter therefore and partake
 The slender entertainment of a house
 Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd."
 "Thanks, venerable friend," replied Geraint;
 "So that you do not serve me sparrow-hawks
 For supper, I will enter, I will eat
 With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast."
 Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed Earl,
 And answer'd, "Graver cause than yours is mine
 To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk:
 But in, go in; for save yourself desire it,
 We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest."

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,
 His charger trampling many a prickly star

Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.
Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern;
And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers:
And high above a piece of turret stair, Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,
And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang
Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle, Moves him to think what kind of bird it is
That sings so delicately clear, and make Conjecture of the plumage and the form;
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint;
And made him like a man abroad at morn
When first the liquid note beloved of men
Comes flying over many a windy wave To Britain, and in April suddenly Breaks from a coppice gumn'd with green and red,
And he suspends his converse with a friend,
Or it may be the labor of his hands,

To think or say, "There is the night-
ingale"; So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said, "Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me."

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

"Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate.

"Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate."

"Hark, by the bird's song ye may learn the nest," Said Yniol; "enter quickly." Entering then, Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones, The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd hall, He found an ancient dame in dim brocade; And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white,

That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,
Her daughter. In a moment thought Geraint,
"Here by God's rood is the one maid for me."
But none spake word except the hoary Earl :
"Enid, the good knight's horse stands in the court ;
Take him to stall, and give him corn, and then
Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine ;
And we will make us merry as we may.
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great."

He spake : the Prince, as Enid past him, fain
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught
His purple scarf, and held, and said,
"Forbear !
Rest ! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my son,
Endures not that her guest should serve himself."
And reverencing the custom of the house
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall ;
And after went her way across the bridge,
And reach'd the town, and while the Prince and Earl
Yet spoke together, came again with one,
A youth, that following with a costrel bore
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and wine.
And Enid brought sweet cakes to make them cheer,
And in her veil unfolded, manchet bread.

And then, because their hall must also serve
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread the board,
And stood behind, and waited on the three.
And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,
Geraint had longing in him evermore
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,
That crost the trencher as she laid it down :
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,
For now the wine made summer in his veins,
Let his eye rove in following, or rest
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,
Now here, now there, about the dusky hall ;
Then suddenly address the hoary Earl :

"Fair Host and Earl, I pray your courtesy ;
This sparrow-hawk, what is he ? tell me of him.
His name ? but no, good faith, I will not have it :
For if he be the knight whom late I saw
Ride into that new fortress by your town,
White from the mason's hand, then have I sworn
From his own lips to have it—I am Geraint
Of Devon—for this morning when the Queen
Sent her own maiden to demand the name,
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,
Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd
Indignant to the Queen; and then I swore
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,
And fight and break his pride, and have it of him.

And all unarm'd I rode, and thought
to find
Arms in your town, where all the men
are mad ;
They take the rustic murmur of their
bourg
For the great wave that echoes round
the world ;
They would not hear me speak : but
if ye know
Where I can light on arms, or if your-
self
Should have them, tell me, seeing I
have sworn
That I will break his pride and learn
his name,
Avenging this great insult done the
Queen."

Then cried Earl Yniol, "Art thou
he indeed,
Geraint, a name far-sounded among
men
For noble deeds ? and truly I, when
first
I saw you moving by me on the
bridge,
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by
your state
And presence might have guess'd you
one of those
That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.
Nor speak I now from foolish flat-
tery ;
For this dear child hath often heard
me praise
Your feats of arms, and often when I
paused
Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to
hear ;
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds
To noble hearts who see but acts of
wrong :
O never yet had woman such a pair
Of suitors as this maiden ; first Lim-
ours,
A creature wholly given to brawls and
wine,
Drunk even when he wo'd ; and be
he dead
I know not, but he passed to the wild
land.

The second was your foe, the sparrow-
hawk,
My curse, my nephew—I will not let
his name
Slip from my lips if I can help it—
he,
When I that knew him fierce and tur-
bulent
Refused her to him, then his pride
awoke ;
And since the proud man often is the
mean,
He sow'd a slander in the common ear,
Affirming that his father left him
gold,
And in my charge, which was not ren-
der'd to him ;
Bribed with large promises the men
who served
About my person, the more easily
Because my means were somewhat
broken into
Thro' open doors and hospitality ;
Raised my own town against me in
the night
Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my
house ;
From mine own earldom foully ousted
me ;
Built that new fort to overawe my
friends,
For truly there are those who love me
yet ;
And keeps me in this ruinous castle
here,
Where doubtless he would put me
soon to death,
But that his pride too much despises
me :
And I myself sometimes despise my-
self ;
For I have let men be, and have their
way ;
Am much too gentle, have not used
my power :
Nor know I whether I be very base
Or very manful, whether very wise
Or very foolish ; only this I know,
That whatsoever evil happen to me,
I seem to suffer nothing heart or
limb,
But can endure it all most patiently."

"Well said, true heart," replied Geraint, "but arms,
That if the sparrow-hawk, this nephew, fight
In next day's tourney I may break his pride."

And Yniol answer'd, "Arms, indeed,
but old
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,
Are mine, and therefore at thine asking, thine.
But in this tournament can no man tilt,
Except the lady he loves best be there.
Two forks are fixt into the meadow ground,
And over these is placed a silver wand,
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,
The prize of beauty for the fairest there.
And this, what knight soever be in field
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,
And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,
Who being apt at arms and big of bone
Has ever won it for the lady with him,
And toppling over all antagonism
Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-hawk.
But thou, that hast no lady, canst not fight."

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright replied,
Leaning a little toward him, "Thy leave!
Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,
For this dear child, because I never saw,
Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.
And if I fall her name will yet remain

Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,
So aid me Heaven when at mine uttermost,
As I will make her truly my true wife."

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart
Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.
And looking round he saw not Enid there,
(Who hearing her own name had stol'n away)
But that old dame, to whom full tenderly
And fondling all her hand in his he said,
"Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,
And best by her that bore her understood.
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the Prince."

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl,
and she
With frequent smile and nod departing found,
Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl;
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,
and then
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,
And told her all their converse in the hall,
Proving her heart: but never light and shade
Coursed one another more on open ground
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and pale
Across the face of Enid hearing her;
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,
When weight is added only grain by grain,
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast;

Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it;
So moving without answer to her rest
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw
The quiet night into her blood, but lay
Contemplating her own unworthiness;
And when the pale and bloodless east began
To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised
Her mother too, and hand in hand they moved
Down to the meadow where the jousts were held,
And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when Geraint
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,
Himself beyond the rest pushing could move
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms
Were on his princely person, but thro' these
Princelike his bearing shone; and errant knights
And ladies came, and by and by the town
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists.
And there they fixt the forks into the ground,
And over these they placed the silver wand,
And over that the golden sparrow-hawk.
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,
Spake to the lady with him and proclaim'd,
"Advance and take as fairest of the fair,
For I these two years past have won it for thee,

The prize of beauty." Loudly spake the Prince,
"Forbear: there is a worthier," and the knight
With some surprise and thrice as much disdain
Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face
Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,
So burnt he was with passion, crying out,
"Do battle for it then," no more; and thrice
They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their spears.
Then each, dis horsed and drawing, lash'd at each
So often and with such blows, that all the crowd
Wonder'd, and now and then from distant walls
There came a clapping as of phantom hands.
So twice they fought, and twice they breathed, and still
The dew of their great labor, and the blood
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their force.
But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry,
"Remember that great insult done the Queen,"
Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,
And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the bone,
And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,
And said, "Thy name?" To whom the fallen man
Made answer, groaning, "Edyrn, son of Nudd!"
Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.
My pride is broken: men have seen my fall."
"Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd," replied Geraint,
"These two things shalt thou do, or else thou diest.

First, thou thyself, with damsel and
with dwarf,
Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and coming there,
Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,
And shalt abide her judgment on it; next,
Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.
These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt die."

And Edyrn answer'd, "These things will I do,
For I have never yet been overthrown,
And thou hast overthrown me, and my pride
Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!"
And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,
And there the Queen forgave him easily.
And being young, he changed and came to loathe
His crime of traitor, slowly drew himself
Bright from his old dark life, and fell at last
In the great battle fighting for the King.

But when the third day from the hunting-morn
Made a low splendor in the world, and wings
Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay
With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,
Among the dancing shadows of the birds,
Woke and bethought her of her promise given
No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—
So bent he seem'd on going the third day,
He would not leave her, till her promise given—
To ride with him this morning to the court,

And there be made known to the stately Queen,
And there be wedded with all ceremony.
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,
And thought it never yet had look'd so mean.
For as a leaf in mid-November is
To what it was in mid-October, seem'd
The dress that now she look'd on to the dress
She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.
And still she look'd, and still the terror grew
Of that strange bright and dreadful thing, a court,
All staring at her in her faded silk :
And softly to her own sweet heart she said :

" This noble prince who won our earldom back,
So splendid in his acts and his attire,
Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit him !
Would he could tarry with us here awhile,
But being so beholden to the Prince,
It were but little grace in any of us,
Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,
To seek a second favor at his hands.
Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,
Myself would work eye dim, and finger lame,
Far liefer than so much discredit him."

And Enid fell in longing for a dress
All branch'd and flower'd with gold,
a costly gift
Of her good mother, given her on the night
Before her birth day, three sad years ago,
That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their house,
And scatter'd all they had to all the winds :
For while the mother show'd it, and the two

Were turning and admiring it, the work
 To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry
 That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled
 With little save the jewels they had on,
 Which being sold and sold had bought them bread :
 And Edyrn's men had caught them in their flight,
 And placed them in this ruin; and she wish'd
 The Prince had found her in her ancient home;
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,
 And roam the goodly places that she knew;
 And last bethought her how she used to watch,
 Near that old home, a pool of golden carp;
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustreless
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool;
 And half asleep she made comparison Of that and these to her own faded self
 And the gay court, and fell asleep again;
 And dreamt herself was such a faded form
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool;
 But this was in the garden of a king;
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she knew
 That all was bright; that all about were birds
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work;
 That all the turf was rich in plots that look'd
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it;
 And lords and ladies of the high court went
 In silver tissue talking things of state;
 And children of the King in cloth of gold
 Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down the walks;
 And while she thought "They will not see me," came

A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,
 And all the children in their cloth of gold
 Ran to her, crying, "If we have fish at all
 Let them be gold; and charge the gardeners now
 To pick the faded creature from the pool,
 And cast it on the mixen that it die." And therewithal one came and seized on her,
 And Enid started waking, with her heart
 All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,
 And lo! it was her mother grasping her
 To get her well awake; and in her hand
 A suit of bright apparel, which she laid
 Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly :
 "See here, my child, how fresh the colors look,
 How fast they hold like colors of a shell
 That keeps the wear and polish of the wave.
 Why not? It never yet was worn, I trow:
 Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know it."
 And Enid look'd, but all confused at first,
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish dream :
 Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,
 And answer'd, "Yea, I know it; your good gift,
 So sadly lost on that unhappy night;
 Your own good gift!" "Yea, surely," said the dame,
 "And gladly given again this happy morn.
 For when the jousts were ended yesterday,

Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-
where
He found the sack and plunder of our
house
All scatter'd thro' the houses of the
town;
And gave command that all which
once was ours
Should now be ours again: and yester-eve,
While ye were talking sweetly with
your Prince,
Came one with this and laid it in my
hand,
For love or fear, or seeking favor of
us,
Because we have our earldom back
again.
And yester-eve I would not tell you
of it,
But kept it for a sweet surprise at
morn.
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?
For I myself unwillingly have worn
My faded suit, as you, my child, have
yours,
And howsoever patient, Yniol his.
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly
house,
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous
fare,
And page, and maid, and squire, and
seneschal,
And pastime both of hawk and hound,
and all
That appertains to noble maintenance.
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly
house;
But since our fortune swerved from
sun to shade,
And all thro' that young traitor, cruel
need
Constrain'd us, but a better time has
come;
So clothe yourself in this, that better
fits
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's
bride:
For tho' ye won the prize of fairest
fair,
And tho' I heard him call you fairest
fair,

Let never maiden think, however fair,
She is not fairer in new clothes than
old.
And should some great court-lady
say, the Prince
Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the
hedge,
And like a madman brought her
to the court,
Then were ye shamed, and, worse,
might shame the Prince
To whom we are beholden; but I
know,
When my dear child is set forth at
her best,
That neither court nor country, tho'
they sought
Thro' all the provinces like those of
old
That lighted on Queen Esther, has
her match."

Here ceased the kindly mother out
of breath;
And Enid listen'd brightening as she
lay;
Then, as the white and glittering star
of morn
Parts from a bank of snow, and by
and by
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden
rose,
And left her maiden couch, and robed
herself,
Help'd by the mother's careful hand
and eye,
Without a mirror, in the gorgeous
gown;
Who, after, turn'd her daughter round,
and said,
She never yet had seen her half so
fair;
And call'd her like that maiden in the
tale,
Whom Gwydion made by glamour out
of flowers,
And sweeter than the bride of Cas-
sivelaun,
Flur, for whose love the Roman
Caesar first
Invaded Britain, "But we beat him
back,

As this great Prince invaded us, and
we,
Not beat him back, but welcomed him
with joy.
And I can scarcely ride with you to
court,
For old am I, and rough the ways and
wild;
But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall
dream
I see my princess as I see her now,
Clothed with my gift, and gay among
the gay."

But while the women thus rejoiced,
Geraint
Woke where he slept in the high hall,
and call'd
For Enid, and when Yniol made report
Of that good mother making Enid
gay
In such apparel as might well beseem
His princess, or indeed the stately
Queen,
He answer'd: "Earl, entreat her by
my love,
Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
That she ride with me in her faded
silk."
Yniol with that hard message went;
it fell
Like flaws in summer laying lusty
corn:
For Enid, all abash'd she knew not
why,
Dared not to glance at her good
mother's face,
But silently, in all obedience,
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,
Laid from her limbs the costly-broid-
er'd gift,
And robed them in her ancient suit
again,
And so descended. Never man re-
joiced
More than Geraint to greet her thus
attired;
And glancing all at once as keenly at
her
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,
Made her cheek burn and either eye-
lid fall,

But rested with her sweet face satis-
fied;
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's
brow,
Her by both hands he caught, and
sweetly said,

"O my new mother, be not wroth
or grieved
At thy new son, for my petition to
her.
When late I left Caerleon, our great
Queen,
In words whose echo lasts, they were
so sweet,
Made promise, that whatever bride I
brought,
Herself would clothe her like the sun
in Heaven.
Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd
hall,
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,
I vow'd that could I gain her, our fair
Queen,
No hand but hers, should make your
Enid burst
Sunlike from cloud — and likewise
thought perhaps,
That service done so graciously would
bind
The two *together; fain I would the
two
Should love each other: how can
Enid find
A nobler friend? Another thought
was mine;
I came among you here so suddenly,
That tho' her gentle presence at the
lists
Might well have served for proof that
I was loved,
I doubted whether daughter's tender-
ness,
Or easy nature, might not let itself
Be moulded by your wishes for her
weal;
Or whether some false sense in her
own self
Of my contrasting brightness, over-
bore
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky
hall:

And such a sense might make her long for court
 And all its perilous glories: and I thought,
 That could I somehow prove such force in her
 Link'd with such love for me, that at a word
 (No reason given her) she could cast aside
 A splendor dear to women, new to her,
 And therefore dearer; or if not so new,
 Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power
 Of intermittent usage; then I felt
 That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,
 Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do rest,
 A prophet certain of my prophecy,
 That never shadow of mistrust can cross
 Between us. Grant me pardon for my thoughts:
 And for my strange petition I will make
 Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,
 When your fair child shall wear your costly gift
 Beside your own warm hearth, with, on her knees,
 Who knows? another gift of the high God,
 Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp you thanks."

He spoke: the mother smiled, but half in tears,
 Then brought a mantle down and wrapt her in it,
 And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had climb'd
 The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,
 Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
 And white sails flying on the yellow sea;

But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
 Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of Usk,
 By the flat meadow, till she saw them come;
 And then descending met them at the gates,
 Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,
 And did her honor as the Prince's bride,
 And clothed her for her bridals like the sun;
 And all that week was old Caerleon gay,
 For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,
 They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsuntide.
 But Enid ever kept the faded silk,
 Remembering how first he came on her,
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,
 And all her foolish fears about the dress,
 And all his journey toward her, as himself
 Had told her, and their coming to the court.

And now this morning when he said to her,
 "Put on your worst and meanest dress," she found
 And took it, and array'd herself therein.

II.

O purblind race of miserable men,
 How many among us at this very hour
 Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,
 By taking true for false, or false for true;
 Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world .

Groping, how many, until we pass and reach
That other, where we see as we are seen !

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth
That morning, when they both had got to horse,
Perhaps because he loved her passionately,
And felt that tempest brooding round his heart,
Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said :
" Not at my side. I charge thee ride before,
Ever a good way on before ; and this I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,
No, not a word ! " and Enid was aghast ;
And forth they rode, but scarce three paces on,
When crying out, " Effeminate as I am,
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,
All shall be iron ; " he loosed a mighty purse,
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the squire.
So the last sight that Enid had of home
Was all the marble threshold flashing, strown
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the squire
Chafing his shoulder : then he cried again,
" To the wilds ! " and Enid leading down the tracks
Thro' which he bade her lead him on, they past
The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the horn,
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode :

Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd soon :
A stranger meeting them had surely thought
They rode so slowly and they look'd so pale,
That each had suffer'd some exceeding wrong.
For he was ever saying to himself, " O I that wasted time to tend upon her,
To compass her with sweet observances,
To dress her beautifully and keep her true" —
And there he broke the sentence in his heart
Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue may break it, when his passion masters him.
And she was ever praying the sweet heavens
To save her dear lord whole from any wound.
And ever in her mind she cast about
For that unnoticed failing in herself, which made him look so cloudy and so cold ;
Till the great plover's human whistle amazed
Her heart, and glancing round the waste she fear'd
In every wavering brake an ambuscade.
Then thought again, " If there be such in me,
I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,
If he would only speak and tell me of it."

But when the fourth part of the day was gone,
Then Enid was aware of three tall knights
On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock
In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all ;
And heard one crying to his fellow, " Look,

Here comes a laggard hanging down
his head,
Who seems no bolder than a beaten
hound;
Come, we will slay him and will have
his horse
And armor, and his damsel shall be
ours."

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart,
and said:
"I will go back a little to my lord,
And I will tell him all their caitiff
talk;
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,
Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,
Than that my lord should suffer loss
or shame."

Then she went back some paces of
return,
Met his full frown timidly firm, and
said;
"My lord, I saw three bandits by the
rock
Waiting to fall on you, and heard
them boast
That they would slay you, and possess
your horse
And armor, and your damsel should
be theirs."

He made a wrathful answer: "Did
I wish
Your warning or your silence? one
command
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,
And thus ye keep it! Well then, look
— for now,
Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,
Long for my life, or hunger for my
death,
Yourself shall see my vigor is not
lost."

Then Enid waited pale and sorrow-
ful,
And down upon him bare the bandit
three.
And at the midmost charging, Prince
Geraint

Drawe the long spear a cubit thro' his
breast
And out beyond; and then against his
brace
Of comrades, each of whom had
broken on him
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,
Swung from his brand a windy buffet
out
Once, twice, to right, to left, and
stunn'd the twain
Or slew them, and dismounting like a
man
That skins the wild beast after slaying
him.
Stript from the three dead wolves of
woman born
The three gay suits of armor which
they wore,
And let the bodies lie, but bound the
suits
Of armor on their horses, each on each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the
three
Together, and said to her, "Drive
them on
Before you;" and she drove them
thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer: ruth began to
work
Against his anger in him, while he
watch'd
The being he loved best in all the
world,
With difficulty in mild obedience
Driving them on: he fain had spoken
to her,
And loosed in words of sudden fire the
wrath
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him
all within;
But evermore it seem'd an easier thing
At once without remorse to strike her
dead,
Than to cry "Halt," and to her own
bright face
Accuse her of the least immodesty:
And thus tongue-tied, it made him
wroth the more
That she could speak whom his own
ear had heard

Call herself false : and suffering thus
he made
Minutes an age : but in scarce longer
time
Than at Caerleon the full-tidied Usk,
Before he turn to fall seaward again,
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold
In the first shallow shade of a deep
wood,
Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted
oaks,
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly
arm'd,
Whereof one seem'd far larger than
her lord,
And shook her pulses, crying, "Look,
a prize !"
Three horses and three goodly suits
of arms,
And all in charge of whom ? a girl :
set on."
" Nay," said the second, " yonder
comes a knight."
The third, " A craven ; how he hangs
his head."
The giant answer'd merrily, " Yea, but
one ?
Wait here, and when he passes fall
upon him."

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and
said,
" I will abide the coming of my lord,
And I will tell him all their villainy.
My lord is weary with the fight before,
And they will fall upon him unawares.
I needs must disobey him for his
good ;
How should I dare obey him to his
harm ?
Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill
me for it,
I save a life dearer to me than mine."

And she abode his coming, and said
to him
With timid firmness, " Have I leave
to speak ?"
He said, " Ye take it, speaking," and
she spoke.

" There lark three villains yonder
in the wood,
And each of them is wholly arm'd,
and one
Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they
say
That they will fall upon you while ye
pass."

To which he flung a wrathful an-
swer back :
" And if there were an hundred in the
wood,
And every man were larger-limb'd
than I,
And all at once should sally out upon
me,
I swear it would not ruffle me so much
As you that not obey me. Stand
aside.
And if I fall, cleave to the better
man."

And Enid stood aside to wait the
event,
Not dare to watch the combat, only
breathe
Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a
breath.
And he, she dreaded most, bare down
upon him.
Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ; but
Geraint's,
A little in the late encounter strain'd,
Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corse-
let home,
And then brake short, and down his
enemy roll'd,
And there lay still ; as he that tells
the tale
Saw once a great piece of a promon-
tory,
That had a sapling growing on it, slide
From the long shore-cliff's windy walls
to the beach,
And there lie still, and yet the sapling
grew :
So lay the man transfixt. His craven
pair
Of comrades making slowlier at the
Prince,

When now they saw their bulwark fallen, stood;
 On whom the victor, to confound them more,
 Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry; for as one,
 That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,
 All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears
 The drumming thunder of the huger fall
 At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear
 His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,
 And foemen scared, like that false pair who turn'd
 Flying, but, overtaken, died the death
 Themselves had wrought on many an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd the lance
 That pleased him best, and drew from those dead wolves
 Their three gay suits of armor, each from each,
 And bound them on their horses, each on each,
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the three
 Together, and said to her, "Drive them on
 Before you," and she drove them thro' the wood.

He follow'd nearer still: the pain she had
 To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,
 Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,
 Together, served a little to disedge
 The sharpness of that pain about her heart:
 And they themselves, like creatures gently born
 But into bad hands fall'n, and now so long
 By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light ears, and felt

Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood they past,
 And issuing under open heavens beheld
 A little town with towers, upon a rock,
 And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased
 In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it:
 And down a rocky pathway from the place
 There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his hand
 Bare victual for the mowers: and Geraint
 Had ruth again on Enid looking pale:
 Then, moving downward to the meadow ground,
 He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by him, said,
 "Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so faint."
 "Yea, willingly," replied the youth;
 "and thou,
 My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,
 And only meet for mowers;" then set down
 His basket, and dismounting on the sward
 They let the horses graze, and ate themselves.
 And Enid took a little delicately,
 Less having stomach for it than desire
 To close with her lord's pleasure; but Geraint
 Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,
 And when he found all empty, was amazed;
 And, "Boy," said he, "I have eaten all, but take
 A horse and arms for guerdon; choose the best."
 He, reddening in extremity of delight,
 "My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold."
 "Ye will be all the wealthier," cried the Prince.
 "I take it as free gift, then," said the boy,

"Not guerdon; for myself can easily,
While your good damsel rests, return,
and fetch
Fresh victual for these mowers of our
Earl;
For these are his, and all the field is
his,
And I myself am his; and I will tell
him
How great a man thou art: he loves
to know
When men of mark are in his terri-
tory:
And he will have thee to his palace
here,
And serve thee costlier than with
mowers' fare."

Then said Geraint, "I wish no better
fare:
I never ate with angrier appetite
Than when I left your mowers dinner-
less.
And into no Earl's palace will I go.
I know, God knows, too much of
palaces!
And if he want me, let him come to
me.
But hire us some fair chamber for the
night,
And stalling for the horses, and re-
turn
With victual for these men, and let
us know."

"Yea, my kind lord," said the glad
youth, and went,
Held his head high, and thought him-
self a knight,
And up the rocky pathway dis-
pear'd,
Leading the horse, and they were left
alone.

But when the Prince had brought
his errant eyes
Home from the rock, sideways he let
them glance
At Enid, where she droopt: his own
false doom,
That shadow of mistrust should never
cross

Betwixt them, came upon him, and he
sigh'd;
Then with another humorous ruth re-
mark'd
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,
And watch'd the sun blaze on the
turning scythe,
And after nodded sleepily in the
heat.
But she, remembering her old ruin'd
hall,
And all the windy clamor of the daws
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the
grass
There growing longest by the mead-
ow's edge,
And into many a listless annulet,
Now over, now beneath her marriage
ring,
Wove and unwove it, till the boy re-
turn'd
And told them of a chamber, and they
went;
Where, after saying to her, "If ye
will,
Call for the woman of the house," to
which
She answer'd, "Thanks, my lord;"
the two remain'd
Apart by all the chamber's width, and
mute
As creatures voiceless thro' the fault
of birth,
Or two wild men supporters of a
shield,
Painted, who stare at open space, nor
glance
The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along
the street,
And heel against the pavement echo-
ing, burst
Their drowse; and either started while
the door,
Push'd from without, drove backward
to the wall,
And midmost of a rout of roisterers,
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,
Limours.

He moving up with pliant courtliness,
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,
In the mid-warmth of welcome and grasp'd hand,
Found Enid with the corner of his eye,
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly cheer
To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously
According to his fashion, bade the host
Call in what men soever were his friends,
And feast with these in honor of their Earl;
" And care not for the cost; the cost is mine."

And wine and food were brought, and Earl Limours
Drank till he jested with all ease, and told
Free tales, and took the word and play'd upon it,
And made it of two colors; for his talk,
When wine and free companions kindled him,
Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem
Of fifty facets; thus he moved the Prince
To laughter and his comrades to applause.
Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd Limours,
" Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak
To your good damsel there who sits apart,
And seems so lonely?" " My free leave," he said;
" Get her to speak: she doth not speak to me."
Then rose Limours, and looking at his feet,
Like him who tries the bridge he fears may fail,

Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly:

" Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
Enid, my early and my only love,
Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me wild —
What chance is this? how is it I see you here?
Ye are in my power at last, are in my power.
Yet fear me not: I call mine own self wild,
But keep a touch of sweet civility
Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.
I thought, but that your father came between,
In former days you saw me favorably.
And if it were so do not keep it back:
Make me a little happier: let me know it:
Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.
And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy,
Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,
You come with no attendance, page or maid,
To serve you — doth he love you as of old?
For, eft lit lovers' quarrels, yet I know
Tho' men may bicker with the things they love,
They would not make them laughable in all eyes,
Not while they loved them; and your wretched dress,
A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks
Your story, that this man loves you no more.
Your beauty is no beauty to him now:
A common chance — right well I know it — pall'd —
For I know men: nor will ye win him back,
For the man's love once gone never returns.

But here is one who loves you as of old;
With more exceeding passion than of
old:
Good, speak the word: my followers
ring him round:
He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up;
They understand: nay; I do not mean
blood:
Nor need ye look so scared at what I
say:
My malice is no deeper than a moat,
No stronger than a wall: there is the
keep;
He shall not cross us more; speak but
the word:
Or speak it not; but then by Him that
made me
The one true lover whom you ever
own'd,
I will make use of all the power I have.
O pardon me! the madness of that
hour,
When first I parted from thee, moves
me yet."

At this the tender sound of his own
voice
And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd
his eyes,
Moist as they were, wine-heated from
the feast;
And answer'd with such craft as
women use,
Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a
chance
That breaks upon them perilously,
and said:

"Earl, if you love me as in former
years,
And do not practise on me, come with
morn,
And snatch me from him as by
violence;
Leave me to-night: I am weary to the
death."

Low at leave-taking, with his bran-
dish'd plume
Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-
amorous Earl,

And the stout Prince bade him a loud
good-night.
He moving homeward babbled to his
men,
How Enid never loved a man but him,
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her
lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince
Geraint,
Debating his command of silence
given,
And that she now perforce must vio-
late it,
Held commune with herself, and while
she held
He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart
To wake him, but hung o'er him,
wholly pleased
To find him yet unwounded after fight,
And hear him breathing low and
equally.
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,
heap'd
The pieces of his armor in one place,
All to be there against a sudden need;
Then dozed awhile herself, but over-
toil'd
By that day's grief and travel, ever-
more
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn,
and then
Went slipping down horrible precip-
ices,
And strongly striking out her limbs
awoke;
Then thought she heard the wild Earl
at the door,
With all his rout of random followers,
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, sum-
moning her;
Which was the red cock shouting to
the light,
As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy
world,
And glimmer'd on his armor in the
room.
And once again she rose to look at it,
But touch'd it unawares: jangling,
the casque
Fell, and he started up and stared at
her.

Then breaking his command of silence given,
 She told him all that Earl Limours had said,
 Except the passage that he loved her not;
 Nor left untold the craft herself had used;
 But ended with apology so sweet,
 Low-spoken, and of so few words, and seem'd
 So justified by that necessity,
 That tho' he thought "was it for him she wept
 In Devon?" he but gave a wrathful groan,
 Saying, "Your sweet faces make good fellows fools
 And traitors. Call the host and bid him bring
 Charger and palfrey." So she glided out
 Among the heavy breathings of the house,
 And like a household Spirit at the walls
 Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and return'd:
 Then tending her rough lord, tho' all unask'd,
 In silence, did him service as a squire,
 Till issuing arm'd he found the host and cried,
 "Thy reckoning, friend?" and ere he learnt it, "Take
 Five horses and their armors"; and the host
 Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,
 "My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of one!"
 "Ye will be all the wealthier," said the Prince,
 And then to Enid, "Forward! and to-day
 I charge you, Enid, more especially,
 What thing soever ye may hear, or see,
 Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use
 To charge you) that ye speak not but obey."

And Enid answer'd, "Yea, my lord,
 I know

Your wish, and would obey; but riding first,
 I hear the violent threats you do not hear,
 I see the danger which you cannot see:
 Then not to give you warning, that seems hard;
 Almost beyond me: yet I would obey."

"Yea so," said he, "do it: be not too wise;
 Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,
 Not all mismatched with a yawning clown,
 But one with arms to guard his head and yours,
 With eyes to find you out however far,
 And ears to hear you even in his dreams."

With that he turn'd and look'd as keenly at her
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil;
 And that within her, which a wanton fool,
 Or hasty judger would have call'd her guilt,
 Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.
 And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten broad,
 Led from the territory of false Limours
 To the waste earldom of another earl,
 Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd the Bull,
 Went Enid with her sullen follower on.
 Once she look'd back, and when she saw him ride
 More near by many a rood than yester-morn,
 It wellnigh made her cheerful; till Geraint
 Waving an angry hand as who should say

"Yewatch me," sadden'd all her heart again.
 But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,
 The sound of many a heavily-galloping hoof
 Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw
 Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.
 Then not to disobey her lord's behest,
 And yet to give him warning, for he rode
 As if he heard not, moving back she held
 Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.
 At which the warrior in his obstinaey,
 Because she kept the letter of his word,
 Was in a manner pleased, and turning, stood.
 And in the moment after, wild Limours,
 Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud
 Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking storm,
 Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,
 And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,
 Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him, and bore
 Down by the length of lance and arm beyond
 The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or dead,
 And overthrew the next that follow'd him,
 And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.
 But at the flash and motion of the man
 They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal
 Of darting fish, that on a summer morn
 Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot
 Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,
 But if a man who stands upon the brink

But lift a shining hand against the sun,
 There is not left the twinkle of a fin
 Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower;
 So, scared but at the motion of the man,
 Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,
 And left him lying in the public way;
 So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled Geraint,
 Who saw the chargers of the two that fell
 Start from their fallen lords, and wildly fly,
 Mixt with the flyers. "Horse and man," he said,
 "All of one mind and all right-honest friends!
 Not a hoof left: and I methinks till now
 Was honest — paid with horses and with arms;
 I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg:
 And so what say ye, shall we strip him there
 Your lover? has your palfrey heart enough
 To bear his armor? shall we fast, or dine?
 No? — then do thou, being right honest, pray
 That we may meet the horsemen of Earl Doorm,
 I too would still be honest." Thus he said:
 And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,
 And answering not a word, she led the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss
 Falls in a far land and he knows it not,
 But coming back he learns it, and the loss
 So pains him that he sickens nigh to death;

So fared it with Geraint, who being
prick'd
In combat with the follower of
Limours,
Bled underneath his armor secretly,
And so rode on, nor told his gentle
wife
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it
himself,
Till his eye darken'd and his helmet
wagg'd ;
And at a sudden swerving of the road,
Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,
The Prince, without a word, from his
horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his
fall,
Suddenly came, and at his side all
pale
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of
his arms,
Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue
eye
Moisten, till she had lighted on his
wound,
And tearing off her veil of faded silk
Had bared her forehead to the blistering
sun,
And swathed the hurt that drain'd her
dear lord's life.
Then after all was done that hand
could do,
She rested, and her desolation came
Upon her, and she wept beside the
way.

And many past, but none regarded
her,
For in that realm of lawless turbu-
lence,
A woman weeping for her murder'd
mate
Was cared as much for as a summer
shower :
One took him for a victim of Earl
Doorm,
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on
him :
Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl;

Half whistling and half singing a
coarse song,
He drove the dust against her veilless
eyes :
Another, flying from the wrath of
Doorm
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
The long way smoke beneath him in
his fear ;
At which her palfrey whinnying lifted
heel
And scour'd into the coppices and was
lost,
While the great charger stood, grieved
like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge
Earl Doorm,
Broad-faced with under-fringe of rus-
set beard,
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of
prey,
Came riding with a hundred lances
up ;
But ere he came, like one that hails a
ship,
Cried out with a big voice, " What, is
he dead ? "
" No, no, not dead ! " she answer'd in
all haste.
" Would some of your kind people
take him up,
And bear him hence out of this cruel
sun ?
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not
dead."

Then said Earl Doorm : " Well, if
he be not dead,
Why wail ye for him thus ? ye seem a
child.
And be he dead, I count you for a
fool ;
Your wailing will not quicken him :
dead or not,
Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.
Yet, since the face is comely — some
of you,
Here, take him up, and bear him to
our hall :
An if he live, we will have him of our
band ;

And if he die, why earth has earth enough
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,
A noble one."

He spake, and past awany,
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,
Each growling like a dog, when his good bone
Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,
Gnawing and growling: so the ruffians growl'd,
Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,
Their chance of booty from the morning's raid,
Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,
Such as they brought upon their forays out
For those that might be wounded; laid him on it
All in the hollow of his shield, and took
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,
(His gentle charger following him unled)
And cast him and the bier in which he lay
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,
And then departed, hot in haste to join
Their luckier mates, but growling as before,
And cursing their lost time, and the dead man,
And their own Earl, and their own souls, and her.
They might as well have blest her: she was deaf
To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,
There in the naked hall, propping his head,
And chafing his pale hands, and calling to him.
Till at the last he waken'd from his swoon,
And found his own dear bride prop-ping his head,
And chafing his faint hands, and calling to him;
And felt the warm tears falling on his face;
And said to his own heart, "She weeps for me":
And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as dead,
That he might prove her to the uttermost,
And say to his own heart, "She weeps for me."

But in the falling afternoon return'd
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the hall.
His lusty spearmen follow'd him with noise:
Each hurling down a heap of things that rang
Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,
And doff'd his helm: and then there flutter'd in,
Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,
And mingled with the spearmen: and Earl Doorm
Struck with a knife's haft hard against the board,
And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his spears.
And men brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves,
And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh:
And none spake word, but all sat down at once,
And ate with tumult in the naked hall,

Feeding like horses when you hear them feed;
 Till Enid shrank far back into herself,
 To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.
 But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,
 He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found
 A damsel drooping in a corner of it.
 Then he remember'd her, and how she wept;
 And out of her there came a power upon him;
 And rising on the sudden he said,
 "Eat!"
 I never yet beheld a thing so pale.
 God's curse, it makes me mad to see you weep.
 Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had your good man,
 For were I dead who is it would weep for me?
 Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath
 Have I beheld a lily like yourself.
 And so there lived some color in your cheek,
 There is not one among my gentlewomen
 Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.
 But listen to me, and by me be ruled,
 And I will do the thing I have not done,
 For ye shall share my earldom with me, girl,
 And we will live like two birds in one nest,
 And I will fetch you forage from all fields,
 For I compel all creatures to my will."

He spoke: the brawny spearman let his cheek bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and turning stared; While some, whose souls the old serpent long had drawn Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd leaf

And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's ear
 What shall not be recorded — women they,
 Women, or what had been those gracious things,
 But now desired the humbling of their best,
 Yea, would have help'd him to it: and all at once
 They hated her, who took no thought of them,
 Bat answer'd in low voice, her meek head yet
 Drooping, "I pray you of your courtesy,
 He being as he is, to let me be."

She spake so low he hardly heard her speak,
 But like a mighty patron, satisfied
 With what himself had done so graciously,
 Assumed that she had thank'd him, adding, "Yea,
 Eat and be glad, for I account you mine."

She answer'd meekly, "How should I be glad
 Henceforth in all the world at anything,
 Until my lord arise and look upon me?"

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her talk,
 As all but empty heart and weariness
 And sickly nothing; suddenly seized on her,
 And bare her by main violence to the board,
 And thrust the dish before her, crying, "Eat."

"No, no," said Enid, vext, "I will not eat
 Till yonder man upon the bier arise,
 And eat with me." "Drink, then," he answer'd. "Here!"
 (And fill'd a horn with wine and held it to her.)

"Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with
fight, or hot,
God's curse, with anger—often I
myself,
Before I well have drunken, scarce
can eat:
Drink therefore and the wine will
change your will."

"Not so," she cried, "By Heaven, I
will not drink
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do
it,
And drink with me; and if he rise no
more,
I will not look at wine until I die."

At this he turn'd all red and paced
his hall,
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper
lip,
And coming up close to her, said at
last:
"Girl, for I see ye scorn my cour-
tesies,
Take warning: yonder man is surely
dead;
And I compel all creatures to my
will.
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore
wail for one,
Who put your beauty to this flout and
scorn
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am
I,
Beholding how ye butt against my
wish,
That I forbear you thus: cross me
no more.
At least put off to please me this poor
gown,
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's
weed:
I love that beauty should go beauti-
fully:
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,
How gay, how suited to the house of
one
Who loves that beauty should go
beautifully?
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this: obey."

He spoke, and one among his gen-
tle women
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign
loom,
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely
blue
Play'd into green, and thicker down
the front
With jewels than the sward with
drops of dew,
When all night long a cloud clings
to the hill,
And with the dawn ascending lets the
day
Strike where it clung: so thickly
shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be
moved
Than hardest tyrants in their day of
power,
With life-long injuries burning un-
avenged,
And now their hour has come; and
Enid said:

"In this poor gown my dear lord
found me first,
And loved me serving in my father's
hall:
In this poor gown I rode with him to
court,
And there the Queen array'd me like
the sun:
In this poor gown he bade me clothe
myself,
When now we rode upon this fatal
quest
Of honor, where no honor can be
gain'd:
And this poor gown I will not cast
aside
Until himself arise a living man,
And bid me cast it. I have griefs
enough:
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me
be:
I never loved, can never love but him:
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentle-
ness,
He being as he is, to let me be."

Then strode the brute Earl up and down his hall,
And took his russet beard between his teeth;
Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood
Crying, "I count it of no more avail,
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you;
Take my salute," unknightly with flat hand,
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,
And since she thought, "He had not dared to do it,
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,"
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,
Which sees the trapper coming thro' the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword,
(It lay beside him in the hollow shield),
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a ball
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.
And all the men and women in the hall
Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two
Were left alone together, and he said:

"Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man;
Done you more wrong: we both have undergone
That trouble which has left me thrice your own:
Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.

And here I lay this penance on myself,
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you yestermorn —
You thought me sleeping, but I heard you say,
I heard you say, that you were no true wife:
I swear I will not ask your meaning in it:
I do believe yourself against yourself,
And will henceforward rather die than doubt."

And Enid could not say one tender word,
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart:
She only pray'd him, "Fly, they will return
And slay you; fly, your charger is without,
My palfrey lost." "Then, Enid, shall you ride
Behind me." "Yea," said Enid, "let us go."
And moving out they found the stately horse,
Who now no more a vassal to the thief,
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,
Neigh'd with all gladness as they came, and stoop'd
With a low whinny toward the pair: and she
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,
Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his foot
She set her own and climb'd; he turn'd his face
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast her arms
About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,

Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind
Than lived thro' her, who in that per-
ilous hour
Put hand to hand beneath her hus-
band's heart,
And felt him hers again: she did not
weep,
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy
mist
Like that which kept the heart of
Eden green
Before the useful trouble of the rain:
Yet not so misty were her meek blue
eyes
As not to see before them on the path,
Right in the gateway of the bandit
hold,
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid
his lance
In rest, and made as if to fall upon
him.
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of
blood,
She, with her mind all full of what
had chanced,
Shriek'd to the stranger "Slay not a
dead man!"
"The voice of Enid," said the knight;
but she,
Beholding it was Edryn son of Nudd,
Was moved so much the more, and
shriek'd again,
"O cousin, slay not him who gave you
life."
And Edryn moving frankly forward
spake:
"My lord Geraint, I greet you with
all love;
I took you for a bandit knight of
Doorm;
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon
him;
Who love you, Prince, with something
of the love
Wherewith we love the Heaven that
chastens us.
For once, when I was up so high in
pride
That I was half-way down the slope
to Hell,
By overthrowing me you threw me
higher.

Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table
Round,
And since I knew this Earl, when I
myself
Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,
I come the mouthpiece of our King to
Doorm
(The King is close behind me) bidding
him
Disband himself, and scatter all his
powers,
Submit, and hear the judgment of the
King."

"He hears the judgment of the King
of kings,"
Cried the wan Prince; "and lo, the
powers of Doorm
Are scatter'd," and he pointed to the
field,
Where, huddled here and there on
mound and knoll,
Were men and women staring and
aghast,
While some yet fled; and then he
plainlier told
How the huge Earl lay slain within
his hall.
But when the knight besought him,
"Follow me,
Prince, to the camp, and in the King's
own ear
Speak what has chanced; ye surely
have endured
Strange chances here alone;" that
other flush'd,
And hung his head, and halted in
reply,
Fearing the mild face of the blameless
King,
And after madness acted question
ask'd:
Till Edlyn crying, "If ye will not go
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to
you."
"Enough," he said, "I follow," and
they went.
But Enid in their going had two fears,
One from the bandit scatter'd in the
field,
And one from Edryn. Every now
and then,

When Edyrn rein'd his charger at
her side,
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,
From which old fires have broken,
men may fear
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving,
said :

" Fair and dear cousin, you that
most had cause
To fear me, fear no longer, I am
changed.
Yourself were first the blameless
cause to make
My nature's prideful sparkle in the
blood
Break into furious flame; being re-
pulsed
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and
wrought
Until I overturn'd him; then set up
(With one main purpose ever at my
heart)
My haughty jousts, and took a para-
mour;
Did her mock-honor as the fairest
fair,
And, toppling over all antagonism,
So wax'd in pride, that I believed
myself
Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh
mad:
And, but for my main purpose in
these jousts,
I should have slain your father, seized
yourself.
I lived in hope that sometime you
would come
To these my lists with him whom best
you loved;
And there, poor cousin, with your
meek blue eyes,
The truest eyes that ever answer'd
Heaven,
Behold me overturn and trample on
him.
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or
pray'd to me,
I should not less have kill'd him.
And you came,—
But once you came,—and with your
own true eyes

Beheld the man you loved (I speak as
one
Speaks of a service done him) over-
throw
My proud self, and my purpose three
years old,
And set his foot upon me, and give
me life.
There was I broken down; there was
I saved:
Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating
the life
He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.
And all the penance the Queen laid
upon me
Was but to rest awhile within her
court;
Where first as sullen as a beast new-
caged,
And waiting to be treated like a
wolf,
Because I knew my deeds were known,
I found,
Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a
grace
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began
To glance behind me at my former
life,
And find that it had been the wolf's
indeed:
And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high
saint,
Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,
Subdued me somewhat to that gentle-
ness,
Which, when it weds with manhood,
makes a man.
And you were often there about the
Queen,
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you
saw;
Nor did I care or dare to speak with
you,
But kept myself aloof till I was
changed;
And fear not, cousin; I am changed
indeed."

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,
Like simple noble natures, credulous

Of what they long for, good in friend
or foe,
There most in those who most have
done them ill.
And when they reach'd the camp the
King himself
Advanced to greet them, and beholding
her
Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a
word,
But went apart with Edyrn, whom he
held
In converse for a little, and return'd,
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from
horse,
And kiss'd her with all pureness,
brother-like,
And show'd an empty tent allotted
her,
And glancing for a minute, till he saw
her
Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and
said :

"Prince, when of late ye pray'd me
for my leave
To move to your own land, and there
defend
Your marches, I was prick'd with
some reproof,
As one that let foul wrong stagnate
and be,
By having look'd too much thro' alien
eyes,
And wrought too long with delegated
hands,
Not used mine own: but now behold
me come
To cleanse this common sewer of all
my realm,
With Edyrn and with others: have
ye look'd
At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly
changed?
This work of his is great and wonder-
ful.
His very face with change of heart is
changed,
The world will not believe a man
repents:
And this wise world of ours is mainly
right.

Full seldom doth a man repent, or use
Both grace and will to pick the vicious
quitch
Of blood and custom wholly out of
him,
And make all clean, and plant himself
afresh.
Edyrn has done it, weeding all his
heart
As I will weed this land before I go.
I, therefore, made him of our Table
Round,
Not rashly, but have proved him
everyway
One of our noblest, our most valorous,
Sanest and most obedient: and indeed
This work of Edyrn wrought upon
himself
After a life of violence, seems to me
A thousand-fold more great and won-
derful
Than if some knight of mine, risking
his life,
My subject with my subjects under
him,
Should make an onslaught single on
a realm
Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by
one,
And were himself nigh wounded to
the death."

So spake the King; low bow'd the
Prince, and feit
His work was neither great nor won-
derful,
And past to Enid's tent; and thither
came
The King's own leech to look into his
hurt;
And Enid tended on him there; and there
Her constant motion round him, and
the breath
Of her sweet tendance hovering over
him,
Fill'd all the genial courses of his
blood
With deeper and with ever deeper
love,
As the south-west that blowing Bala
lake

Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,
The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes
On each of all whom Uther left in charge
Long since, to guard the justice of the King :
He look'd and found them wanting ; and as now
Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills
To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,
He rooted out the slothful officer
Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,
And in their chairs set up a stronger race
With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men
To till the wastes, and moving everywhere
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past
With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,
And clothed her in apparel like the day.
And tho' Geraint could never take again
That comfort from their converse which he took
Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,
He rested well content that all was well.
Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,
And fifty knights rode with them to the shores
Of Severn, and they past to their own land.

And there he kept the justice of the King
So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died :
And being ever foremost in the chase,
And victor at the tilt and tournament,
They call'd him the great Prince and man of men.
But Enid, whom the ladies loved to call
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named
Enid the Good ; and in their halls arose
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints
Of times to be ; nor did he doubt her more,
But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd
A happy life with a fair death, and fell
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

A STORM was coming, but the winds were still,
And in the wild woods of Broceliande,
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and old
It look'd a tower of ruin'd masonwork,
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

Whence came she ? One that bare in bitter grudge
The scorn of Arthur and his Table, Mark
The Cornish King, had heard a wandering voice,
A minstrel of Caerleon by strong storm blown into shelter at Tintagil, say
That out of naked knightlike purity
Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried girl

But the great Queen herself, fought
in her name,
Sware by her — vows like theirs, that
high in heaven
Love most, but neither marry, nor are
given
In marriage, angels of our Lord's re-
port.

He ceased, and then — for Vivien
sweetly said
(She sat beside the banquet nearest
Mark),
“ And is the fair example follow'd,
Sir,
In Arthur's household ? ” — answer'd
innocently :

“ Ay, by some few — ay, truly —
youths that hold
It more beseems the perfect virgin
knight
To worship woman as true wife be-
yond
All hopes of gaining, than as maiden
girl.
They place their pride in Lancelot and
the Queen,
So passionate for an utter purity
Beyond the limit of their bond, are
these,
For Arthur bound them not to single-
ness.
Brave hearts and clean! and yet —
God guide them — young.”

Then Mark was half in heart to
hurl his cup
Straight at the speaker, but forbore :
he rose
To leave the hall, and, Vivien follow-
ing him,
Turn'd to her : “ Here are snakes
within the grass ;
And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye
fear
The monkish manhood, and the mask
of pure
Worn by this court, can stir them till
they sting.”

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-
fully,
“ Why fear ? because that foster'd at
thy court
I savor of thy — virtues ? fear them ?
no.
As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out
fear,
So Hate, if Hate be perfect, casts out
fear.
My father died in battle against the
King,
My mother on his corpse in open field ;
She bore me there, for born from
death was I
Among the dead and sown upon the
wind —
And then on thee ! and shown the
truth betimes,
That old true filth, and bottom of the
well,
Where Truth is hidden. Gracious
lessons thine
And maxims of the mud ! ‘ This
Arthur pure !
Great Nature thro' the flesh herself
hath made
Gives him the lie ! There is no being
pure,
My cherub ; saith not Holy Writ the
same ? —
If I were Arthur, I would have thy
blood.
Thy blessing, stainless King ! I bring
thee back,
When I have ferreted out their bur-
rowings,
The hearts of all this Order in mine
hand —
Ay — so that fate and craft and folly
close,
Perchance, one curl of Arthur's
golden beard.
To me this narrow grizzled fork of
thine
Is cleaner fashion'd — Well, I loved
thee first,
That warps the wit.”

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark,
But Vivien into Camelot stealing,
lodged

Low in the city, and on a festal day
When Guinevere was crossing the
great hall
Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,
and wail'd.

" Why kneel ye there ? What evil
have ye wrought ?
Rise ! " and the damsel bidden rise
arose
And stood with folded bands and
downward eyes
Of glancing corner, and all meekly
said,
" None wrought, but suffer'd much,
an orphan maid !
My father died in battle for thy King,
My mother on his corpse — in open
field,
The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyon-
esse —
Poor wretch — no friend ! — and now
by Mark the King
For that small charm of feature-mine,
pursued —
If any such be mine — I fly to thee.
Save, save me thou — Woman of
women — thine
The wreath of beauty, thine the crown
of power,
Be thine the balm of pity, O Heaven's
own white
Earth-angel, stainless bride of stain-
less King —
Help, for he follows ! take me to thy-
self !
O yield me shelter for mine innocence
Among thy maidens ! "

Here her slow sweet eyes
Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful,
rose
Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen
who stood
All glittering like May sunshine on
May leaves.
In green and gold, and plumed with
green replied,
" Peace, child ! of overpraise and over-
blame
We choose the last. Our noble
Arthur, him

Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear
and know.
Nay — we believe all evil of thy
Mark —
Well, we shall test thee farther ; but
this hour
We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.
He hath given us a fair falcon which
he train'd ;
We go to prove it. Bide ye here the
while."

She past ; and Vivien murmur'd
after " Go !
I bide the while." Then thro' the
portal-arch
Peering askance, and muttering
broken-wise,
As one that labors with an evil dream,
Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to
horse.

" Is that the Lancelot ? goodly —
ay, but gaunt :
Courteous — amends for gauntness —
takes her hand —
That glance of theirs, but for the
street, had been
A clinging kiss — how hand lingers
in hand !
Let go at last ! — they ride away —
to hawk
For waterfowl. Royaller game is
mine.
For such a supersensual sensual bond
As that gray cricket chirpt of at our
hearth —
Touch flax with flame — a glance will
serve — the liars !
Ah little rat that borest in the dyke
Thy hole by night to let the boundless
deep
Down upon far-off cities while they
dance —
Or dream — of thee they dream'd not
— nor of me
These — ay, but each of either : ride,
and dream
The mortal dream that never yet was
mine —
Ride, ride and dream until ye wake —
to me !

Then, narrow court and lubber King,
farewell!
For Lancelot will be gracious to the
rat,
And our wise Queen, if knowing that
I know,
Will hate, loathe, fear—but honor
me the more."

Yet while they rode together down
the plain,
Their talk was all of training, terms
of art,
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.
"She is too noble" he said "to check
at pies,
Nor will she take: there is no base-
ness in her."
Here when the Queen demanded as by
chance
"Know ye the stranger woman?"
"Let her be,"
Said Lancelot and unhooded casting
off
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd;
her bells,
Tone under tone, shrill'd; and they
lifted up
Their eager faces, wondering at the
strength,
Boldness and royal knighthood of the
bird
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.
Many a time
As once—of old—among the flowers
—they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the
Queen
Among her damsels broidering sat,
heard, watch'd
And whisper'd: thro' the peaceful
court she crept
And whisper'd: then as Arthur in the
highest
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the
lowest,
Arriving at a time of golden rest,
And sowing one ill hint from ear to
ear,
While all the heathen lay at Arthur's
feet,

And no quest came, but all was joust
and play,
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and
let her be.

Thereafter as an enemy that has left
Death in the living waters, and with-
drawn,
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's
court.

She hated all the knights, and heard
in thought
Their lavish comment when her name
was named.
For once, when Arthur walking all
alone,
Vext at a rumor issued from herself
Of some corruption crept among his
knights,
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted
fair,
Would fain have wrought upon his
cloudy mood
With reverent eyes mock-loyal,
shaken voice,
And flutter'd adoration, and at last
With dark sweet hints of some who
prized him more
Than who should prize him most; at
which the King
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone
by:
But one had watch'd, and had not held
his peace:
It made the laughter of an afternoon
That Vivien should attempt the
blameless King.
And after that, she set herself to gain
Him, the most famous man of all
those times,
Merlin, who knew the range of all
their arts,
Had built the King his havens, ships,
and halls,
Was also Bard, and knew the starry
heavens;
The people call'd him Wizard; whom
at first
She play'd about with slight and
sprightly talk,

And vivid sinjles, and faintly-venom'd
points
Of slander, glancing here and grazing
there;
And yielding to his kindlier moods,
the Seer
Would watch her at her petulance,
and play,
Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable,
and laugh
As those that watch a kitten; thus he
grew
Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,
and she,
Perceiving that she was but half dis-
dain'd,
Began to break her sports with graver
fits,
Turn red or pale, would often when
they met
Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him
With such a fixt devotion, that the old
man,
Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at
times
Would flatter his own wish in age for
love,
And half believe her true: for thus at
times
He waver'd; but that other clung to
him,
Fixt in her will, and so the seasons
went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melan-
choly;
He walk'd with dreams and darkness,
and he found
A doom that ever poised itself to fall,
An ever-moaning battle in the mist,
World-war of dying flesh against the
life,
Death in all life and lying in all love,
The meanest having power upon the
highest,
And the high purpose broken by the
worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd
the beach;
There found a little boat, and stept
into it;

And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd
her not.
She took the helm and he the sail;
the boat
Drove with a sudden wind across the
deeps,
And touching Breton sands, they dis-
embark'd.
And then she follow'd Merlin all the
way,
Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.
For Merlin once had told her of a
charm,
The which if any wrought on anyone
With woven paces and with waving
arms,
The man so wrought on ever seem'd
to lie
Closed in the four walls of a hollow
tower,
From which was no escape for ever-
more;
And none could find that man for
evermore,
Nor could he see but him who wrought
the charm
Coming and going, and he lay as dead
And lost to life and use and name
and fame.
And Vivien ever sought to work the
charm
Upon the great Enchanter of the
Time,
As fancying that her glory would be
great
According to his greatness whom she
quench'd.

There lay she all her length and
kiss'd his feet,
As if in deepest reverence and in love.
A twist of gold was round her hair; a
robe
Of samite without price, that more
express
Than hid her, clung about her lissome
limbs,
In color like the satin-shining palm
On sallows in the windy gleams of
March:
And while she kiss'd them, crying,
"Trample me,

Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro'
the world,
And I will pay you worship; tread
me down
And I will kiss you for it;" he was
mute:
So dark a forethought roll'd about his
brain,
As on a dull day in an Ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long
sea-hall
In silence: wherefore, when she lifted
up
A face of sad appeal, and spake and
said,
"O Merlin, do ye love me?" and again,
"O Merlin, do ye love me?" and once
more,
"Great Master, do ye love me?" he
was mute.
And lissoome Vivien, holding by his
heel,
Writhed toward him, slidèd up his
knee and sat,
Behind his ankle twined her hollow
feet
Together, curved an arm about his
neck,
Clung like a snake; and letting her
left hand
Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a
leaf,
Made with her right a comb of pearl
to part
The lists of such a beard as youth gone
out
Had left in ashes: then he spoke and
said,
Not looking at her, "Who are wise in
love
Love most, say least," and Vivien
answer'd quick,
"I saw the little elf-god eyeless once
In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot:
But neither eyes nor tongue—O
stupid child!
Yet you are wise who say it; let me
think
Silence is wisdom: I am silent then,
And ask no kiss;" then adding all at
once,

" And lo, I clothe myself with wis-
dom," drew
The vast and shaggy mantle of his
beard
Across her neck and bosom to her
knee,
And call'd herself a gilded summer fly
Caught in a great old tyrant spider's
web,
Who meant to eat her up in that wild
wood
Without one word. So Vivien call'd
herself,
But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star
Veil'd in gray vapor; till he sadly
smiled:
" To what request for what strange
boon," he said,
" Are these your pretty tricks and
fooleries,
O Vivien, the preamble! yet my
thanks,
For these have broken up my melan-
choly."

And Vivien answer'd smiling sau-
cily,
" What, O my Master, have ye found
your voice?
I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks
at last!
But yesterday you never open'd lip,
Except indeed to drink: no cup had
we:
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the
spring
That gather'd trickling dropwise from
the cleft,
And made a pretty cup of both my
hands
And offer'd you it kneeling: then you
drank
And knew no more, nor gave me one
poor word;
O no more thanks than might a goat
have given
With no more sign of reverence than
a beard.
And when we halted at that other
well,
And I was faint to swooning, and you
lay

Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of
those
Deep meadows we had traversed, did
you know
That Vivien bathed your feet before
her own ?
And yet no thanks : and all thro' this
wild wood
And all this morning when I fondled
you :
Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not
so strange —
How had I wrong'd you ? surely ye
are wise,
But such a silence is more wise than
kind."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
and said :
"O did ye never lie upon the shore,
And watch the curl'd white of the
coming wave
Glass'd in the slippery sand before it
breaks ?
Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasurable,
Dark in the glass of some presageful
mood,
Had I for three days seen, ready to
fall.
And then I rose and fled from Arthur's
court
To break the mood. You follow'd me
unask'd ;
And when I look'd, and saw you follow-ing still,
My mind involved yourself the nearest
thing
In that mind-mist : for shall I tell you
truth ?
You seem'd that wave about to break
upon me
And sweep me from my hold upon the
world,
My use and name and fame. Your
pardon, child.
Your pretty sports have brighten'd all
again.
And ask your boon, for boon I owe
you thrice,
Once for wrong done you by confusion,
next

For thanks it seems till now neglected,
last
For these your dainty gambols :
wherefore ask ;
And take this boon so strange and not
so strange."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully :
"O not so strange as my long asking
it,
Not yet so strange as you yourself are
strange,
Nor half so strange as that dark mood
of yours.
I ever fear'd ye were not wholly
mine ;
And see, yourself have own'd ye did
me wrong.
The people call you prophet : let it
be :
But not of those that can expound
themselves.
Take Vivien for expounder ; she will
call
That three-days-long presageful gloom
of yours
No presage, but the same mistrustful
mood
That makes you seem less noble than
yourself,
Whenever I have ask'd this very
boon,
Now ask'd again : for see you not,
dear love,
That such a mood as that, which
lately gloom'd
Your fancy when ye saw me follow-ing you,
Must make me fear still more you are
not mine,
Must make me yearn still more to
prove you mine,
And make me wish still more to learn
this charm
Of woven paces and of waving hands,
As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it
me.
The charm so taught will charm us
both to rest.
For, grant me some slight power upon
your fate,

I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing you mine.
 And therefore be as great as ye are named,
 Not muffled round with selfish reticence.
 How hard you look and how denyingly!
 O, if you think this wickedness in me,
 That I should prove it on you unawares,
 That makes me passing wrathful; then our bond
 Had best be loosed for ever: but think or not,
 By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean truth,
 As clean as blood of babes, as white as milk;
 O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,
 If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,
 Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,
 Have tript on such conjectural treachery —
 May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir hell
 Down, down, and close again, and nip me flat,
 If I be such a traitress. Yield my boon,
 Till which I scarce can yield you all I am;
 And grant my re-iterated wish,
 The great proof of your love: because I think,
 However wise, ye hardly know me yet."

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers and said,
 "I never was less wise, however wise,
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,
 Than when I told you first of such a charm.
 Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,
 Too much I trusted when I told you that,

And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd man
 Thro' woman the first hour; for howsoe'er
 In children a great curioseness be well,
 Who have to learn themselves and all the world,
 In you, that are no child, for still I find
 Your face is practised when I spell the lines,
 I call it, — well, I will not call it vice:
 But since you name yourself the summer fly,
 I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,
 That settles, beaten back, and beaten back
 Settles, till one could yield for weariness:
 But since I will not yield to give you power
 Upon my life and use and name and fame,
 Why will ye never ask some other boon?
 Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too much."

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted maid
 That ever bided tryst at village stile,
 Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears:
 "Nay, Master, be not wrathful with your maid;
 Caress her: let her feel herself forgiven
 Who feels no heart to ask another boon.
 I think ye hardly know the tender rhyme
 Of 'trust me not at all or all in all.'
 I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,
 And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

* In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,

Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers :
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

' It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.

' The little rift within the lover's lute
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

' It is not worth the keeping: let it go:
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.
And trust me not at all or all in all.'

O Master, do ye love my tender rhyme?"

And Merlin look'd and half believed her true,
So tender was her voice, so fair her face,
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her tears
Like sunlight on the plain behind a shower:
And yet he answer'd half indignantly:

" Far other was the song that once I heard
By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit:
For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,
To chase a creature that was current then
In these wild woods, the hart with golden horns.
It was the time when first the question rose
About the founding of a Table Round,
That was to be, for love of God and men
And noble deeds, the flower of all the world.

And each incited each to noble deeds
And while we waited, one, the youngest of us,
We could not keep him silent, out he flash'd,
And into such a song, such fire for fame,
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down
To such a stern and iron-clashing close,
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl together,
And should have done it; but the beauteous beast
Scared by the noise upstarted at our feet,
And like a silver shadow slipt away
Thro' the dim land; and all day long we rode
Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,
That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,
And chased the flashes of his golden horns
Until they vanish'd by the fairy well
That laughs at iron — as our warriors did —
Where children cast their pins and nails, and cry,
' Laugh, little well! ' but touch it with a sword,
It buzzes fiercely round the point; and there
We lost him: such a noble song was that.
But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet rhyme,
I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,
Were proving it on me, and that I lay
And felt them slowly ebbing, name and fame."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully:
" O mine have ebb'd away for evermore,
And all thro' following you to this wild wood,

Because I saw you sad, to comfort
you.
Lo now, what hearts have men! they
never mount
As high as woman in her selfless
mood.
And touching fame, how'er ye scorn
my song,
Take one verse more — the lady
speaks it — this :

"My name, once mine, now thine,
is closerlier mine,
For fame, could fame be mine, that
fame were thine,
And shame, could shame be thine,
that shame were mine.
So trust me not at all or all in all."

"Says she not well? and there is
more — this rhyme
Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the
Queen,
That burst in danceng, and the pearls
were spilt;
Some lost, some stolen, some as reliques
kept.
But nevermore the same two sister
pearls
Ran down the silken thread to kiss
each other
On her white neck — so is it with this
rhyme:
It lives dispersedly in many hands,
And every minstrel sings it differ-
ently;
Yet is there one true line, the pearl of
pearls:
'Man dreams of Fame while woman
wakes to love.'
Yea! Love, tho' Love were of the
grossest, carves
A portion from the solid present, eats
And uses, careless of the rest; but
Fame,
The Fame that follows death is noth-
ing to us;
And what is Fame in life but half-
disfame,
And counterchanged with darkness?
ye yourself

Know well that Envy calls you Devil's
son,
And since ye seem the Master of all
Art,
They fain would make you Master of
all vice."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
and said,
"I once was looking for a magic weed,
And found a fair young squire who
sat alone,
Had carved himself a knightly shield
of wood,
And then was painting on it fancied
arms,
Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun
In dexter chief; the scroll 'I follow
fame.'
And speaking not, but leaning over
him,
I took his brush and blotted out the
bird,
And made a Gardener putting in
graff,
With this for motto, 'Rather use than
fame.'
You should have seen him blush; but
afterwards
He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,
For you, methinks you think you love
me well;
For me, I love you somewhat; rest:
and Love
Should have some rest and pleasure
in himself,
Not ever be too curious for a boon,
Too prurient for a proof against the
grain
Of him ye say ye love: but Fame with
men,
Being but ampler means to serve
mankind,
Should have small rest or pleasure in
herself,
But work as vassal to the larger love,
That dwarfs the petty love of one to
one.
Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame
again
Increasing gave me use. Lo, there
my boon!"

What other? for men sought to prove
me vile,
Because I fain had given them greater
wits:
And then did Envy call me Devil's
son:
The sick weak beast seeking to help
herself
By striking at her better miss'd, and
brought
Her own claw back, and wounded her
own heart.
Sweet were the days when I was all
unknown,
But when my name was lifted up, the
storm
Brake on the mountain and I cared
not for it.
Right well know I that Fame is half-
disfame,
Yet needs must work my work. That
other fame,
To one at least, who hath not children,
vague,
The cackle of the unborn about the
grave,
I cared not for it: a single misty star,
Which is the second in a line of stars
That seem a sword beneath a belt of
three,
I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
Of some vast charm concluded in that
star
To make fame nothing. Wherefore,
if I fear,
Giving you power upon me thro' this
charm,
That you might play me falsely, hav-
ing power,
However well ye think ye love me now
(As sons of kings loving in pupilage
Have turn'd to tyrants when they
came to power)
I rather dread the loss of use than
fame;
If you—and not so much from
wickedness,
As some wild turn of anger, or a mood
Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,
To keep me all to your own self,—or
else
A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—

Should try this charm on whom ye say
ye love."

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in
wrath:
" Have I not sworn? I am not trusted.
Good!
Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it
out;
And being found take heed of Vivien.
A woman and not trusted, doubtless I
Might feel some sudden turn of anger
born
Of ~~your~~ misfaith; and your fine
epithet
Is accurate too, for this full love of
mine
Without the full heart back may
merit well
Your term of overstrain'd. So used
as I,
My daily wonder is, I love at all.
And as to woman's jealousy, O why
not?
O to what end, except a jealous one,
And one to make me jealous if I love,
Was this fair charm invented by your-
self?
I well believe that all about this world
Ye cage a buxom captive here and
there,
Closed in the four walls of a hollow
tower
From which is no escape for ever-
more."

Then the great Master merrily an-
swer'd her:
" Full many a love in loving youth
was mine;
I needed then no charm to keep them
mine
But youth and love; and that full
heart of yours
Whereof ye prattle, may now assure
you mine;
So live uncharmed. For those who
wrought it first,
The wrist is parted from the hand
that waved,
The feet unmortised from their ankle-
bones

Who paced it, ages back: but will ye
hear
The legend as in guerdon for your
rhyme?

"There lived a king in the most
Eastern East,
Less old than I, yet older, for my
blood

Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty
nameless isles;

And passing one, at the high peep of
dawn,
He saw two cities in a thousand boats
All fighting for a woman on the sea.
And pushing his black craft among
them all,

He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought
her off,

With loss of half his people arrow-
slain;

A maid so smooth, so white, so won-
derful,
They said a light came from her when
she moved:

And since the pirate would not yield
her up,

The King impaled him for his piracy;
Then made her Queen: but those isle-
nurtured eyes

Waged such unwilling tho' successful
war

On all the youth, they sicken'd; coun-
cils thinn'd,

And armies waned, for magnet-like
she drew

The rustiest iron of old fighters'
hearts;

And beasts themselves would worship;
camels knelt

Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain
back

That carry kings in castles, bow'd
black knees

Of homage, ringing with their serpent
hands,

To make her smile, her golden ankle-
bells.

What wonder, being jealous, that he
sent

His horns of proclamation out thro'
all
The hundred under-kingdoms that he
sway'd
To find a wizard who might teach the
King
Some charm, which being wrought
upon the Queen,
Might keep her all his own: to such a
one
He promised more than ever king has
given,
A league of mountain full of golden
mines,
A province with a hundred miles of
coast,
A palace and a princess, all for
him:
But on all those who tried and fail'd,
the King
Pronounced a dismal sentence, mean-
ing by it
To keep the list low and pretenders
back,
Or like a king, not to be trifled with—
Their heads should moulder on the
city gates.
And many tried and fail'd, because
the charm
Of nature in her overbore their own:
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on
the walls:
And many weeks a troop of carrion
crows
Hung like a cloud above the gateway
towers."

And Vivien breaking in upon him,
said:
"I sit and gather honey, yet, me-
thinks,
Thy tongue has tript a little: ask thy-
self.
The lady never made *unwilling* war
With those fine eyes: she had her
pleasure in it,
And made her good man jealous with
good cause.
And lived there neither dame nor
damsel then
Wrath at a lover's loss? were all as
tame,

I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair?
 Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,
 Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,
 Or make her paler with a poison'd rose?
 Well, those were not our days: but did they find
 A wizard? Tell me, was he like to thee?"

She ceased, and made her lithe arm round his neck
 Tighten, and then drew back, and let her eyes
 Speak for her, glowing on him, like a bride's
 On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing, " Nay, not like to me.
 At last they found — his foragers for charms —
 A little glassy-headed hairless man,
 Who lived alone in a great wild on grass;
 Read but one book, and ever reading grew
 So grated down and filed away with thought,
 So lean his eyes were monstrous; while the skin
 Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and spine.
 And since he kept his mind on one sole aim,
 Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted flesh,
 Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall
 That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting men
 Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,
 And heard their voices talk behind the wall,
 And learnt their elemental secrets, powers
 And forces; often o'er the sun's bright eye

Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,
 And lash'd it at the base with slanting storm;
 Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,
 When the lake whiten'd and the pine-wood roar'd,
 And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow, sunn'd
 The world to peace again: here was the man.
 And so by force they dragg'd him to the King.
 And then he taught the King to charm the Queen
 In such-wise, that no man could see her more,
 Nor saw she save the King, who wrought the charm,
 Coming and going, and she lay as dead,
 And lost all use of life: but when the King
 Made proffer of the league of golden mines,
 The province with a hundred miles of coast,
 The palace and the princess, that old man
 Went back to his old wild, and lived on grass,
 And vanish'd, and his book came down to me."

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily:
 " Ye have the book: the charm is written in it:
 Good: take my counsel: let me know it at once:
 For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,
 With each chest lock'd and padlock'd thirty-fold,
 Andwhelm all this beneath as vast a mound
 As after furious battle turfs the slain
 On some wild down above the windy deep,
 I yet should strike upon a sudden means

To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm:
Then, if I tried it, who should blame me then?"

And smiling as a master smiles at one
That is not of his school, nor any school
But that where blind and naked Ignorance
Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,
On all things all day long, he answer'd her:

"Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!
O ay, it is but twenty pages long,
But every page having an ample marge,
And every marge enclosing in the midst
A square of text that looks a little blot,
The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;
And every square of text an awful charm,
Writ in a language that has long gone by.
So long, that mountains have arisen since
With cities on their flanks — thou read the book!
And every margin scribbled, crost,
and cramm'd
With comment, densest condensation,
hard
To mind and eye; but the long sleepless nights
Of my long life have made it easy to me.
And none can read the text, not even I;
And none can read the comment but myself;
And in the comment did I find the charm.
O, the results are simple; a mere child
Might use it to the harm of any one,

And never could undo it: ask no more:
For tho' you should not prove it upon me,
But keep that oath ye sware, ye might, perchance,
Assay it on some one of the Table Round,
And all because ye dream they babble of you."

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said:
"What dare the full-fed liars say of me?
They ride abroad redressing human wrongs!
They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn!
They bound to holy vows of chastity!
Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.
But you are man, you well can understand
The shame that cannot be explain'd for shame.
Not one of all the drove should touch me: swine!"

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her words:
"You breathe but accusation vast and vague,
Spleen-born, I think, and proofless.
If ye know,
Set up the charge ye know, to stand or fall!"

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrathfully:
"O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence,
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his wife
And two fair babes, and went to distant lands;
Was one year gone, and on returning found
Not two but three? there lay the reckling, one
But one hour old! What said the happy sire?

A seven-months' babe had been a
truer gift.
Those twelve sweet moons confused
his fatherhood."

Then answer'd Merlin, "Nay, I
know the tale.
Sir Valence wedded with an outland
dame:
Some cause had kept him sunder'd
from his wife:
One child they had: it lived with her:
she died:
His kinsman travelling on his own
affair
Was charged by Valence to bring
home the child.
He brought, not found it therefore:
take the truth."

"O ay," said Vivien, "overtune a
tale.
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sag-
ramore,
That ardent man? 'to pluck the
flower in season,'
So says the song, 'I trow it is no
treason.'
O Master, shall we call him overquick
To crop his own sweet rose before the
hour?"

And Merlin answer'd, "Overquick
art thou
To catch a loathly plume fall'n from
the wing
Of that foul bird of rapine whose
whole prey
Is man's good name: he never wrong'd
his bride.
I know the tale. An angry gust of
wind
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-
room'd
And many-corridor'd complexities
Of Arthur's palace: then he found a
door.
And darkling felt the sculptured
ornament
That wreathen round it made it seem
his own;

And wearied out made for the couch
and slept,
A stainless man beside a stainless
maid;
And either slept, nor knew of other
there;
Till the high dawn piercing the royal
rose
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd
chastely down,
Blushing upon them blushing, and at
once
He rose without a word and parted
from her:
But when the thing was blazed about
the court,
The brute world howling forced them
into bonds,
And as it chanced they are happy,
being pure."

"O ay," said Vivien, "that were
likely too.
What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale
And of the horrid foulness that he
wrought,
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb
of Christ,
Or some black wether of St. Satan's
fold.
What, in the precincts of the chapel-
yard,
Among the knightly brasses of the
graves,
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the
dead!"

And Merlin answer'd careless of her
charge,
"A sober man is Percivale and pure;
But once in life was fluster'd with new
wine,
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-
yard;
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses
caught
And meant to stamp him with her
master's mark;
And that he sinn'd is not believable;
For, look upon his face! — but if he
sinn'd,

The sin that practice burns into the blood,
And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,
Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be:
Or else were he, the holy king, whose hymns
Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye more?"

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath:
"O ay; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend
Traitor or true? that commerce with the Queen,
I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,
Or whisper'd in the corner? do ye know it?"

To which he answer'd sadly, "Yea, I know it.
Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,
To fetch her, and she watch'd him from her walls.
A rumor runs, she took him for the King,
So fixt her fancy on him: let them be.
But have ye no one word of loyal praise
For Arthur, blameless King and stainless man?"

She answer'd with a low and chuckling laugh:
"Man! is he man at all, who knows and winks?
Sees what his fair bride is and does, and winks?
By which the good King means to blind himself,
And blinds himself and all the Table Round
To all the foulness that they work.
Myself could call him (were it not for womanhood)

The pretty, popular name such man-hood earns,
Could call him the main cause of all their crime;
Yea, were he not crown'd King, coward, and fool."

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing, said:
"O true and tender! O my liege and King!
O selfless man and stainless gentleman,
Who wouldst against thine own eye-witness fain
Have all men true and leal, all women pure;
How, in the mouths of base interpreters,
From over-fineness not intelligible
To things with every sense as false and foul
As the poach'd filth that floods the middle street,
Is thy white blamelessness accounted blame!"

But Vivien, deeming Merlin overborne
By instance, recommenced, and let her tongue
Rage like a fire among the noblest names,
Polluting, and imputing her whole self,
Defaming and defacing, till she left
Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean.

Her words had issue other than she will'd.
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and made
A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,
And mutter'd in himself, "Tell her the charm!
So, if she had it, would she rail on me
To snare the next, and if she have it not
So will she rail. What did the wanton say?

' Not mount as high ; ' we scarce can
sink as low :
For men at most differ as Heaven and
earth,
But women, worst and best, as Heaven
and Hell.
I know the Table Round, my friends
of old ;
All brave, and many generous, and
some chaste.
She cloaks the scar of some repulse
with lies ;
I well believe she tempted them and
fail'd,
Being so bitter : for fine plots may
fail.
Tho' harlots paint their talk as well
as face
With colors of the heart that are not
theirs.
I will not let her know : nine tithes of
times
Face-flatterer and backbiter are the
same.
And they, sweet soul, that most im-
pute a crime
Are pronest to it, and impute them-
selves,
Wanting the mental range ; or low
desire
Not to feel lowest makes them level
all ;
Yea, they would pare the mountain
to the plain,
To leave an equal baseness ; and in
this
Are harlots like the crowd, that if
they find
Some stain or blemish in a name of
note,
Not grieving that their greatest are so
small,
Inflate themselves with some insane
delight,
And judge all nature from her feet of
clay,
Without the will to lift their eyes, and
see
Her godlike head crown'd with spir-
itual fire,
And touching other worlds. I am
weary of her."

He spoke in words part heard, in
whispers part,
Half-suffocated in the hoary fell
And many-winter'd fleece of throat
and chin.
But Vivien, gathering somewhat of
his mood,
And hearing " harlot " mutter'd twice
or thrice,
Leapt from her session on his lap, and
stood
Stiff as a viper frozen ; loathsome
sight,
How from the rosy lips of life and
love,
Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of
death !
White was her cheek ; sharp breaths
of anger puff'd
Her fairy nostril out ; her hand half-
clench'd
Went faltering sideways downward to
her belt,
And feeling ; had she found a dagger
there
(For in a wink the false love turns
to hate)
She would have stabb'd him ; but she
found it not :
His eye was calm, and suddenly she
took
To bitter weeping like a beaten child,
A long, long weeping, not consolable.
Then her false voice made way, broken
with sobs :

" O crueller than was ever told in
tale,
Or sung in song ! O vainly lavish'd
love !
O cruel, there was nothing wild or
strange,
Or seeming shameful — for what
shame in love,
So love be true, and not as yours is—
nothing
Poor Vivien had not done to win his
trust
Who call'd her what he call'd her—
all her crime,
All—all—the wish to prove him
wholly hers."

She mused a little, and then clapt
her hands
Together with a wailing shriek, and
said :
" Stabb'd through the heart's affec-
tions to the heart !
Seethed like the kid in its own mother's
milk !
Kill'd with a word worse than a life
of blows !
I thought that he was gentle, being
great :
O God, that I had loved a smaller man !
I should have found in him a greater
heart.
O, I, that flattering my true passion,
saw
The knights, the court, the King, dark
in your light,
Who loved to make men darker than
they are,
Because of that high pleasure which
I had
To seat you sole upon my pedestal
Of worship — I am answer'd, and
henceforth
The course of life that seem'd so
flowery to me
With you for guide and master, only
you,
Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken
short,
And ending in a ruin — nothing left,
But into some low cave to crawl, and
there,
If the wolf spare me, weep my life
away,
Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness."

She paused, she turn'd away, she
hung her head,
The snake of gold slid from her hair,
the braid
Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept
afresh,
And the dark wood grew darker
toward the storm
In silence, while his anger slowly died
Within him, till he let his wisdom go
For ease of heart, and half believed
her true :
Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,

" Come from the storm," and having
no reply,
Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and
the face
Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or
shame ;
Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest
touching terms,
To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in
vain.
At last she let herself be conquer'd by
him,
And as the cageling newly flown re-
turns,
The seeming-injured, simple-hearted
thing
Came to her old perch back, and set-
tled there.
There while she sat, half-falling from
his knees,
Half-nestled at his heart, and since he
saw
The slow tear creep from her closed
eye-lid yet,
About her, more in kindness than in
love,
The gentle wizard cast a shielding
arm.
But she dislink'd herself at once and
rose,
Her arms upon her breast across, and
stood,
A virtuous gentlewoman deeply
wrong'd.
Upright and flush'd before him : then
she said :

" There must be now no passages of
love
Betwixt us twain henceforward ever-
more ;
Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,
What should be granted which your
own gross heart
Would reckon worth the taking ? I
will go.
In truth, but one thing now — better
have died
Thrice than have ask'd it once — could
make me stay —
That proof of trust — so often ask'd
in vain !

How justly, after that vile term of yours,
I find with grief ! I might believe you then,
Who knows ? once more. Lo ! what was once to me
Mere matter of the fancy, now hath grown
The vast necessity of heart and life.
Farewell ; think gently of me, for I fear
My fate or folly, passing gayer youth
For one so old, must be to love thee still.
But ere I leave thee let me swear once more
That if I schemed against thy peace in this,
May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er me, send
One flash, that, missing all things else, may make
My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie."

Scarce had she ceased, when out of heaven a bolt
(For now the storm was close above them) struck,
Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining
With darted spikes and splinters of the wood
The dark earth round. He raised his eyes and saw
The tree that shone white-listed thro' the gloom.
But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her oath,
And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,
And deafen'd with the stammering cracks and claps
That follow'd, flying back and crying out,
"O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,
Yet save me!" clung to him and hugg'd him close;
And call'd him dear protector in her fright,
Nor yet forgot her practice in her

But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd him close.
The pale blood of the wizard at her touch
Took gayer colors, like an opal warm'd.
She blamed herself for telling hearsay tales :
She shook from fear, and for her fault she wept
Of petulance ; she call'd him lord and liege,
Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,
Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate love
Of her whole life ; and ever overhead Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten branch
Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain
Above them ; and in change of glare and gloom
Her eyes and neck glittering went and came ;
Till now the storm, its burst of passion spent,
Moaning and calling out of other lands,
Had left the ravaged woodland yet once more
To peace ; and what should not have been had been,
For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,
Had yielded, told her all the charm, and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth the charm
Of woven paces and of waving hands,
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
And lost to life and use and name and fame.

Then crying "I have made his glory mine,"
And shrieking out "O fool!" the harlot leapt
Adown the forest, and the thicket closed
Behind her, and the forest echo'd "fool."

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to
the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lance-
lot;
Which first she placed where morn-
ing's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with
the gleam;
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd
for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her
wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the
nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by
day,
Leaving her household and good
father, climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering
barr'd her door,
Stript off the case, and read the naked
shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his
arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in
it,
And every scratch a lance had made
upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this
cut is fresh;
That ten years back; this dealt him
at Caerlyle;
That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
And ab God's mercy, what a stroke
was there!
And here a thrust that might have
kill'd, but God
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his
enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fan-
tasy.

How came the lily maid by that
good shield

Of LanceLOT, she that knew not ev'n
his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to
tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond
jousts,
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by
that name
Had named them, since a diamond
was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they
crown'd him King,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyon-
nesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and
black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and
clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain
side:
For here two brothers, one a king,
had met
And fought together; but their names
were lost;
And each had slain his brother at a
blow;
And down they fell and made the glen
abhorr'd:
And there they lay till all their bones
were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into color with the crags:
And he, that once was king, had on a
crown
Of diamonds, one in front, and four
aside.
And Arthur came, and laboring up the
pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton,
and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the
skull the crown
Roll'd into light, and turning on its
rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the
tarn:
And down the shingly scaur he
plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise
shalt be King."

Thereafter, when a King, he had the
gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd
them to his knights,
Saying "These jewels, whereupon I
chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the
King's—
For public use: henceforward let
there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of
these:
For so by nine years' proof we needs
must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves
shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we
drive
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule
the land
Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus
he spoke:
And eight years past, eight jousts had
been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the
year,
With purpose to present them to the
Queen,
When all were won; but meaning all
at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never
spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and
the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his
court
Hard on the river nigh the place which
now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a
joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew
nigh
Spake (for she had been sick) to
Guinevere,
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you can
not move
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord,"
she said, "ye know it."
"Then will ye miss," he answer'd,
"the great deeds

Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the
lists,
A sight ye love to look on." And the
Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt lan
guidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside
the King.
He thinking that he read her meaning
there,
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is
more
Than many diamonds," yielded; and
a heart
Love-loyal to the least wish of the
Queen
(However much he yearn'd to make
complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined
boon)
Urged him to speak against the truth,
and say,
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is
hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle;" and
the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and
went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she
began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,
much to blame!
Why go ye not to these fair jousts?
the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the
crowd
Will murmur, 'Lo the shameless
ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful King
is gone!'"
Then Lancelot vext at having lied in
vain:
"Are ye so wise? ye were not once
so wise,
My Queen, that summer, when ye
loved me first.
Then of the crowd ye took no more
account
Than of the myriad cricket of the
mead,

When its own voice clings to each
blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to
knights,
Them surely can I silence with all
ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd
If all men: many a bard, without
offence,
Has link'd our names together in his
lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery,
Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty: and our knights
at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while
the King
Would listen smiling. How then? is
there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would
yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless
lord?"

She broke into a little scornful
laugh:
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the fault-
less King,
That passionate perfection, my good
lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in
heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to
me,
He never had a glimpse of mine un-
truth,
He cares not for me: only here to-day
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his
eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd
with him—else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself: but,
friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at
all:
For who loves me must have a touch
of earth;
The low sun makes the color: I am
yours,

Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by
the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to
the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break
our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin
voices here
May buzz so loud — we scorn them,
but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief
of knights:
"And with what face, after my pre-
text made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot,
Before a King who honors his own
work,
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft to
rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to
me,
If I must find you wit: we hear it
said
That men go down before your spear
at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your
great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go
unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our
true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my
knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him
true,
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er
he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than
himself:
They prove to him his work: win and
return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to
horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be
known,

He left the barren-beaten thorough-fare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and dis-arm'd.
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;
And issuing found the lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stept the lily maid—
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house.
There was not: some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approach'd them: then the Lord of Astolat:
“ Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown.”

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:

“ Known am I, and of Arthur's hall,
and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,
Hereafter ye shall know me—and the shield—
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine.”

Then said the Lord of Astolat,
“ Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have.” Then added plain Sir Torre,
“ Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it.”
Here laugh'd the father saying, “ Fie,
Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
And set it in this damsels golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before.”

“ Nay, father, nay good father,
shame me not
Before this noble knight,” said young Lavaine,
“ For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,

And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That if I went and if I fought and won it
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:
Win shall I not, but do my best to win:
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So ye will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend:
And you shall win this diamond,—as I hear
It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will."
"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,
"Such be for queens, and not for simple maids."
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so oft about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it: but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind:
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best

And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
 And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
 And ever well and readily answer'd he :
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
 Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,
 The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
 " He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
 Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd ;
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
 By the great river in a boatman's hut.
 Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
 The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

" O there, great lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt
 By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
 Toward greatness in its elder, " you have fought.
 O tell us—for we live apart—you know
 Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke
 And answer'd him at full, as having been
 With Arthur in the fight which all day long
 Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem ;
 And in the four loud battles by the shore
 Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
 That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts
 Of Celidon the forest; and again

By castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
 Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
 Carved of one emerald center'd in a sun
 Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed ;
 And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,
 When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse
 Set every gilded parapet shuddering ;
 And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
 And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
 Where many a heathen fell ; " and on the mount
 Of Badon I myself beheld the King Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
 And all his legions crying Christ and him,
 And break them ; and I saw him, after, stand
 High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
 Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
 And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
 ' They are broken, they are broken ! ' for the King,
 However mild he seems at home, nor cares
 For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
 For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
 Saying, his knights are better men than he —
 Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
 Fills him : I never saw his like : there lives
 No greater leader."

While he utter'd this,
 Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
 " Save your great self, fair lord ; " and when he fell

From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —
 Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind —
 She still took note that when the living smile
 Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
 Of melancholy severe, from which again,
 Whenever in her hovering to and fro
 The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
 There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
 Of manners and of nature: and she thought
 That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
 And all night long his face before her lived,
 As when a painter, poring on a face,
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
 Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
 The shape and color of a mind and life,
 Lives for his children, ever at its best
 And fullest; so the face before her lived,
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
 Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
 She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
 First as in fear, step after step, she stole
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot ery in the court,
 "This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
 Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
 There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd

The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
 Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed
 Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
 The maiden standing in the dewy light.
 He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's. Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,
 That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
 "Fair lord, whose name I know not — noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
 My favor at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
 "Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
 Favor of any lady in the lists.
 Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know."
 "Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing mine
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
 That those who know should know you." And he turn'd
 Her counsel up and down within his mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd "True, my child.
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
 What is it?" and she told him "A red sleeve
 Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he bound
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile
 Saying, "I never yet have done so much

For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with
 delight;
But left her all the paler, when
 Lavaine
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd
 shield,
His brother's; which he gave to
 Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair
 Elaine:
"Do me this grace, my child, to have
 my shield
In keeping till I come." "A grace to
 me,"
She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am
 your squire!"
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing,
 "Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your color
 back;
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you
 hence to bed."
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his
 own hand,
And thus they moved away: she
 stay'd a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate,
 and there—
Her bright hair blown about the
 serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's
 kiss—
Paused by the gateway, standing near
 the shield
In silence, while she watch'd their
 arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipt below the
 downs
Then to her tower she climb'd, and
 took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions
 past away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless
 downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there
 lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty
 years

A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and
 pray'd,
And ever laboring had scoop'd him-
 self
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shoreclif
 cave,
And cells and chambers: all were fair
 and dry;
The green light from the meadows
 underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky
 roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-
 trees
And poplars made a noise of falling
 showers.
And thither wending there that night
 they bode.

But when the next day broke from
 underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro'
 the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and
 rode away:
Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but
 hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the
 Lake."
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant rever-
 ence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their
 own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, "Is it
 indeed?"
And after muttering "The great
 Lancelot,"
At last he got his breath and answer'd,
 "One,
One have I seen—that other, our
 liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King
 of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there—then were I stricken
 blind
That minute, I might say that I had
 seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they
 reach'd the lists

By Camelot in the meadow, let his
eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which
half round
Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the
grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King,
who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be
known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon
clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed
in gold,
And from the carven-work behind
him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to
make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest
of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innu-
merable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they
found
The new design wherein they lost
themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the
work:
And, in the costly canopy o'er him
set,
Blazed the last diamond of the name-
less king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young
Lavaine and said,
"Me you call great: mine is the
firmer seat,
The truer lance: but there is many a
youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I
am
And overcome it; and in me there
dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off
touch
Of greatness to know well I am not
great:
There is the man." And Lavaine
gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did
either side,

They that assail'd, and they that held
the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly
move,
Meet in the midst, and there so
furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well
perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thun-
der of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker; then he
hurl'd into it
Against the stronger: little need to
speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke,
earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he
overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's
kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that
held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a
stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the
deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the
other, "Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force
alone—
The grace and versatility of the man!
Is it not Lancelot?" "When has
Lancelot worn
Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we, that know
him, know."
"How then? who then?" a fury
seized them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with
theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd
their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the
wind they made
In moving, all together down upon
him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide
North-sea,

Green-glimmering toward the summit,
bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against
the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the
bark,
And him that helms it, so they over-
bore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a
spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and
a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and
the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,
and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and wor-
shipfully ;
He bore a knight of old repute to the
earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot
where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony,
got,
But thought to do while he might yet
endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party, — tho' it seem'd half-
miracle
To those he fought with, — drove his
kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held
the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trum-
pets blew
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore
the sleeve
Of scarlet, and the pearls ; and all the
knights,
His party, cried " Advance and take
thy prize
The diamond;" but he answer'd,
" Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little
air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is
death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow
me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly
from the field

With young Lavaine into the poplar
grove.
There from his charger down he slid,
and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, " Draw the
lance-head : "
" Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said
Lavaine,
" I dread me, if I draw it, you will
die."
But he, " I die already with it : draw —
Draw," — and Lavaine drew, and Sir
Lancelot gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly
groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and
down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd
away.
Then came the hermit out and bare
him in,
There stanch'd his wound ; and there,
in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a
week
Hid from the wide world's rumor by
the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling
showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he
lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled
the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North
and West,
Lords of waste marches, kings of des-
olate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon,
saying to him,
" Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we
won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath
left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is
death."
" Heaven hinder," said the King, " that
such an one,
So great a knight as we have seen
to-day —
He seem'd to me another Lancelot —

Yea, twenty times I thought him
Lancelot—
He must not pass uncared for.
Wherefore, rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the
knight.
Wounded and wearied needs must he
be near.
I charge you that you get at once to
horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes
not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly
given:
His prowess was too wondrous. We
will do him
No customary honor: since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the
prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and
take
This diamond, and deliver it, and
return,
And bring us where he is, and how he
fares,
And cease not from your quest until
ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower
above,
To which it made a restless heart, he
took,
And gave, the diamond: then from
where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face
arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart,
a Prince
In the mid might and flourish of his
May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous,
fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and
Geraint
And Gareth, a good knight, but
therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child
of Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and
now
Wroth that the King's command to
sally forth

In quest of whom he knew not, made
him leave
The banquet, and concourse of knights
and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and
went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in
mood,
Past, thinking "Is it Lancelot who
hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for
gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to
wound,
And ridd'n away to die?" So fear'd
the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there,
return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay,
lord," she said.
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the
Queen amazed,
"Was he not with you? won he not
your prize?"
"Nay, but one like him." "Why that
like was he."
And when the King demanded how
she knew,
Said, "Lord, no sooner had ye parted
from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common
talk
That men went down before his spear
at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his
great name
Conquer'd; and therefore would he
hide his name
From all men, ev'n the King, and to
this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering
wound.
That he might joust unknown of all,
and learn
If his old prowess were in aught
decay'd;
And added, 'Our true Arthur, when
he learns,

Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory?"

Then replied the King :
" Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it
been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted
thee.
Surely his King and most familiar
friend
Might well have kept his secret. True,
indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter :
now remains
But little cause for laughter : his own
kin —
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love
him, this ! —
His kith and kin, not knowing, set
upon him ;
So that he went sore wounded from
the field :
Yet good news too : for goodly hopes
are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely
heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his
helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with
great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift."

" Yea, lord," she said,
" Thy hopes are mine," and saying
that, she choked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her
face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung
herself
Down on the great King's couch, and
writhed upon it,
And clenched her fingers till they bit
the palm,
And shriek'd out "Traitor" to the
unhearing wall,
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose
again,
And moved about her palace, proud
and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region
round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of
the quest,
Touch'd at all points, except the pop-
lar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat :
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms
the maid
Glanced at, and cried, " What news
from Camelot, lord ?
What of the knight with the red
sleeve ? " " He won."
" I knew it," she said. " But parted
from the jousts
Hurt in the side," whereat she caught
her breath ;
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp
lance go ;
Thereon she smote her hand : wellnigh
she swoon'd :
And, while he gazed wonderingly at
her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom
the Prince
Reported who he was, and on what
quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could
not find
The victor, but had ridd'n a random
round
To seek him, and had wearied of the
search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat, " Bide
with us,
And ride no more at random, noble
Prince !
Here was the knight, and here he left
a shield ;
This will he send or come for : fur-
thermore
Our son is with him ; we shall hear
anon,
Needs must we hear." To this the
courteous Prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor
in it,
And stay'd ; and cast his eyes on fair
Elaine :
Where could be found face daintier ?
then her shape

From forehead down to foot, perfect
—again
From foot to forehead exquisitely
turn'd :
" Well—if I bide, lo ! this wild flower
for me !"
And oft they met among the garden
yews,
And there he set himself to play upon
her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a
height
Above her, graces of the court, and
songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden
eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the
maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him,
" Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he
left,
Whence you might learn his name ?
Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on,
and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipt her at,
and went
To all the winds ?" " Nay, by mine
head," said he,
" I lose it, as we lose the lark in
heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue
eyes ;
But an ye will it let me see the
shield."
And when the shield was brought, and
Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd
with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,
and mock'd :
" Right was the King ! our Lancelot !
that true man !"
" And right was I," she answer'd
merrily, " I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest
knight of all."
" And if I dream'd," said Gawain,
" that you love

This greatest knight, your pardon ! lo,
ye know it !
Speak therefore: shall I waste myself
in vain ?"
Full simple was her answer, " What
know I ?
My brethren have been all my fellow-
ship ;
And I, when often they have talk'd
of love,
Wish'd it had been my mother, for
they talk'd,
Meseem'd, of what they knew not ; so
myself —
I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
I know there is none other I can
love."
" Yea, by God's death," said he, " ye
love him well,
But would not, knew ye what all
others know,
And whom he loves." " So be it,"
cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved
away :
But he pursued her, calling, " Stay a
little !
One golden minute's grace ! he wore
your sleeve :
Would he break faith with one I may
not name ?
Must our true man change like a leaf
at last ?
Nay—like enow : why then, far be it
from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his
loves !
And, damsel, for I deem you know
full well
Where your great knight is hidden,
let me leave
My quest with you ; the diamond also ;
here !
For if you love, it will be sweet to
give it ;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have
it
From your own hand ; and whether
he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you
well

A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter: there,
I think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went,
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told the King
What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I learnt;
But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region: but I lighted on the maid Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and to her, Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it; For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied, "Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe, For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word, Linger'd that other, staring after him; Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad About the maid of Astolat, and her love.

All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed: "The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot, Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat." Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all Had marvel what the maid might be, but most Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news. She, that had heard the noise of it before, But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low, Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity. So ran the tale like fire about the court, Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared: Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen, And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat With lips severely placid, felt the knot Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor Beneath the banquet, where the meats became As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat, Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart, Crept to her father, while he mused alone, Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,

"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
 Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
 Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
 "Nay," said he, "surely?" "Wherefore, let me hence,"
 She answer'd, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
 "Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
 Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear anon
 Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
 "And of that other, for I needs must hence
 And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
 And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
 Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
 As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.
 Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
 Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
 The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
 My father, to be sweet and serviceable
 To noble knights in sickness, as ye know
 When these have worn their tokens: let me hence
 I pray you." Then her father nodding said,
 "Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,
 Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
 Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—
 And sure I think this fruit is hung too high,
 For any mouth to gape for save a queen's—

Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,
 Being so very wilful you must go."
 Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
 And while she made her ready for her ride,
 Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,
 "Being so very wilful you must go," And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
 "Being so very wilful you must die." But she was happy enough and shook it off,
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
 "What matter, so I help him back to life?" Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates Came on her brother with a happy face
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet For pleasure all about a field of flowers:
 Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,
 "Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!" How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?"
 But when the maid had told him all her tale,
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods Left them, and under the strange-stated gate,
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,
 His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;

And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
 Led to the caves: there first she saw the casque
 Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
 Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she laugh'd,
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
 But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,
 His battle-written arms and mighty hands
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream
 Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
 The sound not wonted in a place so still
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,
 "Your prize the diamond sent you by the King :"
 His eyes glisten'd: she fancied "Is it for me ?"
 And when the maid had told him all the tale
 Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.
 At once she slipt like water to the floor,

"Alas," he said, "your ride hath wearied you.
 Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;
 "Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
 What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
 In the heart's colors on her simple face;
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind,
 And being weak in body said no more;
 But did not love the color; woman's love,
 Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
 There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and past
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
 Thence to the cave: so day by day she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,
 And likewise many a night: and Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
 Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
 Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,

Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's
first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep
love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in
all
The simples and the science of that
time,
Told him that her fine care had saved
his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple
blush,
Would call her friend and sister,
sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and
regret
Her parting step, and held her ten-
derly,
And loved her with all love except
the love
Of man and woman when they love
their best,
Closest and sweetest, and had died the
death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her
first
She might have made this and that
other world
Another world for the sick man; but
now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd
him,
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely
true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sick-
ness made
Full many a holy vow and pure re-
solve.
These, as but born of sickness, could
not live:
For when the blood ran lustier in him
again,
Full often the bright image of one
face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his
heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a
cloud.

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly
grace
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he
answer'd not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew
right well
What the rough sickness meant, but
what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd
her sight,
And drove her ere her time across the
fields
Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmur'd, "Vain, in vain: it
cannot be.
He will not love me: how then? must
I die?"
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few
notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and
o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, "Must
I die?"
And now to right she turn'd, and now
to left,
And found no ease in turning or in
rest;
And "Him or death," she mutter'd,
"death or him,"
Again and like a burthen, "Him or
death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt
was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her
sweet self
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd
her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she
thought
"If I be loved, these are my festal
robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he
fall."
And Lancelot ever prest upon the
maid
That she should ask some goodly gift
of him

For her own self or hers ; " and do not shun
 To speak the wish most near to your true heart ;
 Such service have ye done me, that I make
 My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I
 In mine own land, and what I will I can."
 Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
 But like a ghost without the power to speak.
 And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
 And bode among them yet a little space
 Till he should learn it ; and one morn it chanced
 He found her in among the garden yews,
 And said, " Delay no longer, speak your wish,
 Seeing I go to-day " : then out she brake :
 " Going ? and we shall never see you more.
 And I must die for want of one bold word."
 " Speak : that I live to hear," he said, " is yours."
 Then suddenly and passionately she spoke :
 " I have gone mad. I love you : let me die."
 " Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot, " what is this ? "
 And innocently extending her white arms,
 " Your love," she said, " your love — to be your wife."
 And Lancelot answer'd, " Had I chosen to wed,
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine :
 But now there never will be wife of mine."
 " No, no," she cried, " I care not to be wife,
 But to be with you still, to see your face,

To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world." And Lancelot answer'd, " Nay, the world, the world, All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue To blare its own interpretation — nay, Full ill then should I quit your brother's love, And your good father's kindness." And she said, " Not to be with you, not to see your face — Alas for me then, my good days are done." " Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, " ten times nay ! This is not love : but love's first flash in youth, Most common : yea, I know it of mine own self : And you yourself will smile at your own self Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age : And then will I, for true you are and sweet Beyond mine old belief in womanhood, More specially should your good knight be poor, Endow you with broad land and territory Even to the half my realm beyond the seas, So that would make you happy furthermore, Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my blood, In all your quarrels will I be your knight. This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake, And more than this I cannot." While he spoke She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then
replied :
" Of all this will I nothing ; " and so
fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to
her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those
black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father :
" Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom
dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lance-
lot.
I pray you, use some rough dis-
courtesy
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
" That were against me : what I can
I will ; "
And there that day remain'd, and
toward even
Sent for his shield : full meekly rose
the maid,
Stript off the case, and gave the naked
shield ;
Then, when she heard his horse upon
the stones,
Unclasping flung the casement back,
and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her
sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking
sound ;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was look-
ing at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved
his hand,
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one courtesy that he
used.

So in her tower alone the maiden
sat :
His very shield was gone ; only the
case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor,
left.

But still she heard him, still his picture
form'd
And grew between her and the pic-
tured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low
tones,
" Have comfort," whom she greeted
quietly.
Then came her brethren saying,
" Peace to thee,
Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with
all calm.
But when they left her to herself
again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a dis-
tant field
Approaching thro' the darkness,
call'd ; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she
mixt
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted
glooms
Of evening, and the moanings of the
wind.

And in those days she made a little
song,
And call'd her song " The Song of
Love and Death,"
And sang it : sweetly could she make
and sing.

" Sweet is true love tho' given in
vain, in vain ;
And sweet is death who puts an end
to pain :
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

" Love, art thou sweet ? then bitter
death must be :
Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death
to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me
die.

" Sweet love, that seems not made
to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us
loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook the tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yesterday
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide,

And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not: but this night I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will:'
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one:
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!"

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, ye seem light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,

"I never loved him: an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down.
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To whom the gentle sister made reply,
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd, echoing "highest?"
(He meant to break the passion in her) "nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:
And she returns his love in open shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger: these are slanders: never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best.
And greatest, tho' my love had no return:

Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire;
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiv'n,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised; which being writ
And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,
Deny me not," she said — "ye never yet
Denied my fancies — this, however strange,
My latest: lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deek it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.

And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
 To take me to the river, and a barge
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black,
 I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
 There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
 And none of you can speak for me so well.
 And therefore let our dumb old man alone
 Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
 Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon
 She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death
 Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
 But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,
 And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
 Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
 There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
 So those two brethren from the chariot took
 And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung

The silken case with braided blazonings,
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her
 "Sister, farewell for ever," and again
 "Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood —
 In her right hand the lily, in her left
 The letter — all her bright hair streaming down —
 And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
 All but her face, and that clear-featured face
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
 But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
 The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
 With deaths of others, and almost his own,
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw
 One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
 With such and so unmoved a majesty
 She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,
 Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
 The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
 In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
 And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward
 the stream,
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling
 utter'd, " Queen,
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my
 joy,
 Take, what I had not won except for
 you,
 These jewels, and make me happy,
 making them
 An armlet for the roundest arm on
 earth,
 Or necklace for a neck to which the
 swan's
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these
 are words:
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I
 sin
 In speaking, yet O grant my worship
 of it
 Words, as we grant grief tears. Such
 sin in words
 Perchance, we both can pardon: but,
 my Queen,
 I hear of rumors flying thro' your
 court.
 Our bond, as not the bond of man and
 wife,
 Should have in it an absuluter trust
 To make up that defect: let rumors
 be:
 When did not rumors fly? these, as I
 trust
 That you trust me in your own noble-
 ness,
 I may not well believe that you be-
 lieve."

While thus he spoke, half turn'd
 away, the Queen
 Brake from the vast oriel-embowering
 vine
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast
 them off,
 Till all the place whereon she stood
 was green;
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold
 passive hand
 Received at once and laid aside the
 gems
 There on a table near her, and replied:

" It may be, I am quicker of belief
 Than you believe me, Lancelot of the
 Lake.
 Our bond is not the bond of man and
 wife.
 This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
 It can be broken easier. I for you
 This many a year have done despite
 and wrong
 To one whom ever in my heart of
 hearts
 I did acknowledge nobler. What are
 these?
 Diamonds for me! they had been
 thrice their worth
 Being your gift, had you not lost your
 own.
 To loyal hearts the value of all
 gifts
 Must vary as the giver's. Not for
 me!
 For her! for your new fancy. Only
 this
 Grant me, I pray you: have your joys
 apart.
 I doubt not that however changed,
 you keep
 So much of what is graceful: and
 myself
 Would shun to break those bounds of
 courtesy
 In which as Arthur's Queen I move
 and rule:
 So cannot speak my mind. An end
 to this!
 A strange one! yet I take it with
 Amen.
 So pray you, add my diamonds to her
 pearls;
 Deck her with these; tell her, she
 shines me down:
 An armlet for an arm to which the
 Queen's
 Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
 O as much fairer—as a faith once fair
 Was richer than these diamonds—
 hers not mine—
 Nay, by the mother of our Lord him-
 self,
 Or hers or mine, mine now to work
 my will—
 She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide
for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd,
and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flash'd,
as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they past
away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half
disdain
At love, life, all things, on the window
ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right
across
Where these had fallen, slowly past
the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest
night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not,
burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the
barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding,
paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the
door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over
tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and
eyes that ask'd
“What is it?” but that oarsman's
haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that
men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken
rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and
they said,
“He is enchanted, cannot speak —
and she,
Look how she sleeps — the Fairy
Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they?
flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to Fairy-
land?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot
die,
But that he passes into Fairyland.”

While thus they babbled of the
King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turn'd
the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye,
and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the
doors.
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the
maid;
And reverently they bore her into
hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and won-
der'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused
at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied
her:
But Arthur spied the letter in her
hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it;
this was all:

“ Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of
the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no fare-
well,
Hither, to take my last farewell of
you.
I loved you, and my love had no
return,
And therefore my true love has been
my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan.
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lan-
celot,
As thou art a knight peerless.”

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading, lords and
dames
Wept, looking often from his face who
read
To hers which lay so silent, and at
times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking
that her lips,

Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all :
 " My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
 Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
 Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
 But loved me with a love beyond all love
 In women, whomsoever I have known.
 Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
 Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
 I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
 No cause, not willingly, for such a love :
 To this I call my friends in testimony,
 Her brethren, and her father, who himself
 Besought me to be plain and blunt,
 And use,
 To break her passion, some courtesy
 Against my nature: what I could, I did.
 I left her and I bade her no farewell ;
 Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
 I might have put my wits to some rough use,
 And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen (Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)
 " Ye might at least have done her so much grace,
 Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."
 He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
 He adding,
 " Queen, she would not be content
 Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
 Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd ;

It could not be. I told her that her love
 Was but the flash of youth, would darken down
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
 Toward one more worthy of her — then would I,
 More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
 Estate them with large land and territory
 In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
 To keep them in all joyance: more than this
 I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, " O my knight,
 It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
 And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
 To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
 Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
 The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,
 And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see,
 The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
 Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
 And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
 And when the knights had laid her comely head
 Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
 Then Arthur spake among them,
 " Let her tomb Be costly, and her image thereupon,
 And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
 Be carven, and her lily in her hand.

And let the story of her dolorous voyage
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
 In letters gold and azure!" which was wrought
 Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames
 And people, from the high door streaming, brake
 Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
 Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,
 "Lancelot,
 Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,
 "That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven."
 But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
 Approach'd him, and with full affection said,

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have most joy and most affiance, for I know what thou hast been in battle by my side, And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt Strike down the lusty and long practised knight, And let the younger and unskill'd go by To win his honor and to make his name, And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man Made to be loved; but now I would to God, Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes, Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems, By God for thee alone, and from her face,

If one may judge the living by the dead,
 Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
 Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
 Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
 Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
 My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she was, my King,
 Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
 To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
 To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—
 Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest," said the King.
 "Let love be free; free love is for the best:
 And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
 What should be best, if not so pure a love
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
 And at the inrunning of a little brook Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
 And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
 Low in himself, "Ah simple heart and sweet,

Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul ?
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at last —
 Farewell, fair lily. ‘Jealousy in love ?’
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir,
 jealous pride ?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
 May not your crescent fear for name and fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes ?
 Why did the King dwell on my name to me ?
 Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake Caught from his mother's arms — the wondrous one
 Who passes thro' the vision of the night —
 She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
 She kiss'd me saying, ‘Thou art fair, my child,
 As a king's son,’ and often in her arms She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
 Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be !
 For what am I ? what profits me my name
 Of greatest knight ? I fought for it, and have it :
 Pleasure to have it, none ; to lose it, pain ;
 Now grown a part of me : but what use in it ?
 To make men worse by making my sin known ?
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great ?
 Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
 Not after Arthur's heart ! I needs must break

These bonds that so defame me : not without She wills it : would I, if she will'd it ? nay, Who knows ? but if I would not, then may God, I pray him, send a sudden Angel down To seize me by the hair and bear me far, And fling me deep in that forgotten mere, Among the tumbled fragments of the hills.”

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
 Not knowing he should die a holy man.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done
 In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,
 Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd The Pure,
 Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer,
 Praise, fast, and alms ; and leaving for the cowl
 The helmet in an abbey far away
 From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
 Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,
 And honor'd him, and wrought into his heart
 A way by love that waken'd love within,
 To answer that which came : and as they sat
 Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half
 The cloisters, on a gnisful April morn
 That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke
 Above them, ere the summer when he died,

The monk Ambrosius question'd
Percivale:

"O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years:
For never have I known the world without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale: but thee,
When first thou camest — such a courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice —
I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,
Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King; and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,
My brother? was it earthly passion crost?"

"Nay," said the knight; "for no such passion mine
But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women watch
Who wins, who falls; and waste the spiritual strength
Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven."

To whom the monk: "The Holy Grail! — I trust
We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here too much
We moulder — as to things without I mean —
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours,

Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so low
We heard not half of what he said.
What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?"

"Nay, monk! what phantom?" answer'd Percivale.
"The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
This, from the blessed land of Aromat —
After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah — the good saint
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.
And there awhile it bode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to Heaven, and disappear'd."

To whom the monk: "From our old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build;
And there he built with wattles from the marsh
A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours, but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?"

"A woman," answer'd Percivale,
"a nun,
And one no further off in blood from
me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the
stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden
glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maiden-
hood,
With such a fervent flame of human
love,
Which being rudely blunted, glanced
and shot
Only to holy things; to prayer and
praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms.
And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the
Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table
Round,
And the strange sound of an adulter-
ous race,
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all
the more.

"And he to whom she told her sins,
or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for
sin.
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters
old,
From our Lord's time. And when
King Arthur made
His Table Round, and all men's hearts
became
Clean for a season, surely he had
thought
That now the Holy Grail would come
again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it
would come,
And heal the world of all their wicked-
ness!
'O Father!' ask'd the maiden, 'might
it come'

To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay,"
said he,
'I know not, for thy heart is pure as
snow.'
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the
sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her,
and I thought
She might have risen and floated when
I saw her.

"For on a day she sent to speak
with me.
And when she came to speak, behold
her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beauti-
ful,
Beyond all knowing of them, won-
derful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness.
And 'O my brother Percivale,' she
said,
'Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy
Grail:
For, waked at dead of night, I heard
a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, "It is not
Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight;" and the slien-
der sound
As from a distance beyond distance
grew
Coming upon me — O never harp nor
horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or
touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and
then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and
silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the
Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if
alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were
dyed
With rosy colors leaping on the wall;
And then the music faded, and the
Grail
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from
the walls

The rosy quiverings died into the night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be seen
By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd.'

"Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd
Always, and many among us many a week
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

"And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armor, Galahad.
'God make thee good as thou art beautiful,'
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight; and none,
In so young youth, was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

"Sister or brother none had he; but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they,
Life birds of passage piping up and down,
That gape for flies—we know not whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

"But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,
Saying, 'My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city:' and as she spake
She sent her deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief.

"Then came a year of miracle: O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it 'The Siege perilous.'
Perilous for good and ill; 'for there,' he said,
'No man could sit but he should lose himself:
And once by misadventure Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,

Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, 'If I lose myself, I save myself!'

"Then on a summer night it came to pass,
While the great banquet lay along the hall,
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

"And all at once, as there we sat,
we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and over-head
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day:
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
All overcover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and it past.
But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and sware
a vow.

"I sware a vow before them all,
that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware
the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest."

Then spake the monk Ambrosius,
asking him,

"What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?"

"Nay, for my lord," said Percivale,
"the King,
Was not in hall: for early that same day,
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
Crying on help: for all her shining hair
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
In tempest: so the King arose and went
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees
That made such honey in his realm.
Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then began
To darken under Camelot; whence the King
Look'd up, calling aloud, 'Lo, there!
the roofs
Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke!
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt.'
For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
As having there so oft with all his knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

"O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,

By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.
And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, 'We have still a King.'

"And, brother, had you known our hall within,
Broader and higher than any in all the lands!
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
And all the light that falls upon the board
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.
Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,
And blank: and who shall blazon it? when and how? —

O there, perchance, when all our wars are done,
The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

"So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all:
And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke, and sear'd, Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, prest: and then the King Spake to me, being nearest, 'Perceval,'
(Because the hall was all in tumult — some Vowing, and some protesting), 'what is this ?'

"O brother, when I told him what had chanced,
My sister's vision, and the rest, his face Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
When some brave deed seem'd to be done in vain,
Darken; and 'Woe is me, my knights,' he cried,
'Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.'
Bold was mine answer, 'Had thyself been here,
My King, thou wouldest have sworn.'
'Yea, yea,' said he,
'Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail ?'

"'Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,

But since I did not see the Holy Thing,
I sware a vow to follow it till I saw.'

"Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any Had seen it, all their answers were as one:
'Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows.'

"Lo now," said Arthur, "have ye seen a cloud? What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd, 'But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail, I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry — 'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'"

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King, "for such As thou art is the vision, not for these. Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign — Holier is none, my Percivale, than she — A sign to maim this Order which I made. But ye, that follow but the leader's bell' (Brother, the King was hard upon his knights) 'Taliessin is our fullest throat of song, And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne Five knights at once, and every younger knight, Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot, Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye, What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor Percivales'

(For thus it pleased the King to range me close After Sir Galahad); 'nay,' said he, 'but men With strength and will to right the wrong'd, of power To lay the sudden heads of violence flat, Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd and dyed The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood — But one hath seen, and all the blind will see. Go, since your vows are sacred, being made: Yet — for ye know the cries of all my realm Pass thro' this hall — how often, O my knights, Your places being vacant at my side, This chance of noble deeds will come and go Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most, Return no more: ye think I show myself Too dark a prophet: come now, let us meet The morrow morn once more in one full field Of gracious pastime, that once more the King, Before ye leave him for this Quest, may count The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights, Rejoicing in that Order which he made.'

"So when the sun broke next from under ground, All the great table of our Arthur closed And clash'd in such a tourney and so full, So many lances broken — never yet Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur came;

And I myself and Galahad, for a strength
Was in us from the vision, overthrew
So many knights that all the people
cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their
heat,
Shouting, 'Sir Galahad and Sir Per-
civale!'

"But when the next day brake
from under ground—
O brother, had you known our Came-
lot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so
old
The King himself had fears that it
would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim; for
where the roofs
Totter'd toward each other in the
sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of
those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and
where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the
necks
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder,
showers of flowers
Fell as we past; and men and boys
astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners, named us each by
name,
Calling 'God speed!' but in the ways
below
The knights and ladies wept, and rich
and poor
Wept, and the King himself could
hardly speak
For grief, and all in middle street the
Queen,
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and
shriek'd aloud,
'This madness has come on us for our
sins.'
So to the Gate of the three Queens we
came,
Where Arthur's wars are render'd
mystically,

And thence departed every one his
way.

"And I was lifted up in heart, and
thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the
lists,
How my strong lance had beaten down
the knights,
So many and famous names; and
never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor
earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I
knew
That I should light upon the Holy
Grail.

"Thereafter, the dark warning of
our King,
That most of us would follow wander-
ing fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my
mind.
Then every evil word I had spoken
once,
And every evil thought I had thought
of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried, 'This Quest is not
for thee.'
And lifting up mine eyes, I found my-
self
Alone, and in a land of sand and
thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, 'This Quest is not
for thee.'

"And on I rode, and when I thought
my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and
then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisp-
ing white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping
wave,
And took both ear and eye; and o'er
the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the
brook

Fallen, and on the lawns. 'I will rest here,'
I said, 'I am not worthy of the Quest;'
But even while I drank the brook, and
ate
The goodly apples, all these things at
once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,
And thirsting, in a land of sand and
thorns.

"And then behold a woman at a
door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby
she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she
rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who
should say,
'Rest here;' but when I touch'd her,
lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the
house
Became no better than a broken shed.
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

"And on I rode, and greater was
my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across
the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in
the field,
The plowman left his plowing, and
fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her
pail,
The milkmaid left her milking, and
fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but
thought
'The sun is rising,' tho' the sun had
risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me
moved
In golden armor with a crown of gold
About a casque all jewels; and his
horse
In golden armor jewell'd everywhere:

And on the splendor came, flashing
me blind;
And seem'd to me the Lord of all the
world,
Being so huge. But when I thought
he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he,
too,
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he
came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and
he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand and
thorns.

"And I rode on and found a mighty
hill,
And on the top, a city wall'd: the
spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into
heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd;
and these
Cried to me climbing, 'Welcome, Per-
civale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest
among men!'
And glad was I and clomb, but found
at top
No man, nor any voice. And thence
I past
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but
there I found
Only one man of an exceeding age.
'Where is that goodly company,' said I,
'That so cried out upon me?' and he
had
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet
gasp'd,
'Whence and what art thou?' and
even as he spoke
Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I
Was left alone once more, and cried
in grief,
'Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into
dust.'

"And thence I dropt into a lowly
vale,

Low as the hill was high, and where
the vale
Was lowest, found a chapel, and
thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he
said :

"O son, thou hast not true humility,
The highest virtue, mother of them all;
For when the Lord of all things made
Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal change,
"Take thou my robe," she said, "for
all is thine,"
And all her form shone forth with
sudden light
So that the angels were amazed, and she
Follow'd Him down, and like a flying
star
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the
east;
But her thou hast not known: for
what is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and
thy sins?
Thou hast not lost thyself to save
thyself
As Galahad.' When the hermit made
an end,
In silver armor suddenly Galahad
shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt
in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my burn-
ing thirst,
And at the sacring of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone; but he,
'Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw
the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the
shrine:
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread, and
went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first
to see,
This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side,
nor come

Cover'd, but moving with me night
and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the black-
en'd marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain
top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere
below
Blood-red. And in the strength of
this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs every-
where,
And past thro' Pagan realms, and
made them mine,
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and
bore them down,
And broke thro' all, and in the strength
of this
Come victor. But my time is hard at
hand,
And hence I go; and one will crown
me king
Far in the spiritual city; and come
thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I
go.'

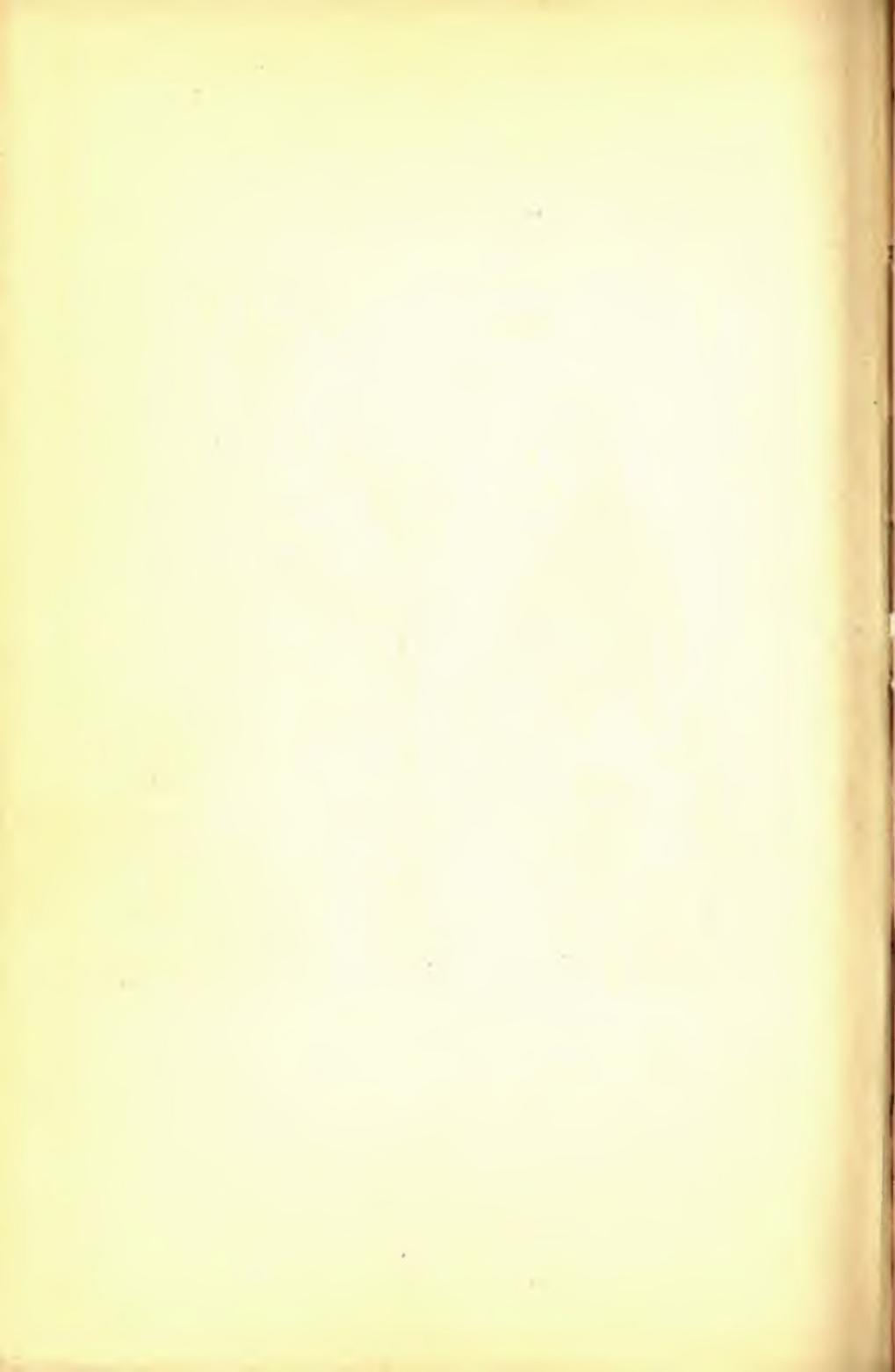
"While thus he spake, his eye,
dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I
grew
One with him, to believe as he be-
lieved.
Then, when the day began to wane,
we went.

"There rose a hill that none but
man could climb,
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-
courses—
Storm at the top, and when we gain'd
it, storm
Round us and death; for every mo-
ment glanced
His silver arms and gloom'd: so quick
and thick
The lightnings here and there to left
and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about
us, dead,



*"In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way."*

THE BEGGAR MAID



Yea, rotten with a hundred years of
 death,
 Sprang into fire: and at the base we
 found
 On either hand, as far as eye could see,
 A great black swamp and of an evil
 smell,
 Part black, part whiten'd with the
 bones of men,
 Not to be crost, save that some ancient
 king
 Had built a way, where, link'd with
 many a bridge,
 A thousand piers ran into the great
 Sea.
 And Galahad fled along them bridge
 by bridge,
 And every bridge as quickly as he
 crost
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I
 yearn'd
 To follow; and thrice above him all
 the heavens
 Open'd and blazed with thunder such
 as seem'd
 Shoutings of all the sons of God: and
 first
 At once I saw him far on the great
 Sea,
 In silver-shining armor starry-clear;
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
 hung
 Clothed in white samite or a luminous
 cloud.
 And with exceeding swiftness ran the
 boat,
 If boat it were — I saw not whence it
 came.
 And when the heavens open'd and
 blazed again
 Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —
 And had he set the sail, or had the
 boat
 Become a living creature clad with
 wings?
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
 hung
 Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
 For now I knew the veil had been
 withdrawn.
 Then in a moment when they blazed
 again

Opening, I saw the least of little stars
 Down on the waste, and straight
 beyond the star
 I saw the spiritual city and all her
 spires
 And gateways in a glory like one
 pearl —
 No larger, tho' the goal of all the
 saints —
 Strike from the sea; and from the
 star there shot
 A rose-red sparkle to the city, and
 there
 Dwelt, and I know it was the Holy
 Grail,
 Which never eyes on earth again
 shall see.
 Then fell the floods of heaven drown-
 ing the deep.
 And how my feet recrost the death-
 ful ridge
 No memory in me lives; but that I
 touch'd
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know;
 and thence
 Taking my war-horse from the holy
 man,
 Glad that no phantom vext me more,
 return'd
 To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's
 wars."

"O brother," ask'd Ambrosius, —
 "for in sooth
 These ancient books — and they would
 win thee — teem,
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
 With miracles and marvels like to
 these,
 Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,
 Who read but on my breviary with
 ease,
 Till my head swims; and then go forth
 and pass
 Down to the little thorpe that lies so
 close,
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's
 nest
 To these old walls — and mingle with
 our folk;
 And knowing every honest face of
 theirs

As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
 And every homely secret in their hearts,
 Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
 And ills and aches, and teethings,
 lyings-in,
 And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
 That have no meaning half a league away:
 Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,
 Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,
 Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,
 Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs—
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
 Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,
 No man, no woman?"

Then Sir Percivale:
 "All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
 And women were as phantoms. O my brother,
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee
 How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?
 For after I had lain so many nights,
 A bedmate of the snail and eft and snake,
 In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan
 And meagre, and the vision had not come;
 And then I chanced upon a goodly town
 With one great dwelling in the middle of it;
 Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd
 By maidens each as fair as any flower:
 But when they led me into hall, behold,
 The Princess of that castle was the one,

Brother, and that one only, who had ever
 Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old
 A slender page about her father's hall,
 And she a slender maiden, all my heart
 Went after her with longing: yet we twain
 Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow.
 And now I came upon her once again,
 And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
 And all his land and wealth and state
 were hers.
 And while I tarried, every day she set
 A banquet richer than the day before
 By me; for all her longing and her will
 Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn,
 I walking to and fro beside a stream
 That flash'd across her orchard underneath
 Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
 And calling me the greatest of all knights,
 Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,
 And gave herself and all her wealth to me.
 Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
 That most of us would follow wandering fires,
 And the Quest faded in my heart.
 Anon,
 The heads of all her people drew to me,
 With supplication both of knees and tongue:
 'We have heard of thee: thou art our greatest knight,
 Our Lady says it, and we well believe:
 Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
 And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land.'
 O me, my brother! but one night my vow

Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own self,
And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but her;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad
Cared not for her, nor anything upon earth."

Then said the monk, "Poor men, when yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be Heaven
That brought thee here to this poor house of ours
Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm
My cold heart with a friend: but O the pity
To find thine own first love once more — to hold,
Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,
Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed.
For we that want the warmth of double life,
We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet
Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,
But live like an old badger in his earth,
With earth about him everywhere, despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,
None of your knights?"

"Yea so," said Percivale:
"One night my pathway swerving east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors

All in the middle of the rising moon:
And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him, and he me,
And each made joy of either; then he ask'd,
'Where is he? hast thou seen him — Lancelot? — Once,'
Said good Sir Bors, 'he dash'd across me — mad,
And maddening what he rode: and when I cried,
"Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest So holy," Lancelot shouted, "Stay me not!
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the way."
So vanish'd.'

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,
Because his former madness, once the talk
And scandal of our table, had return'd;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worshipped him
That ill to him is ill to them; to Bors Beyond the rest: he well had been content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed, Being so clouded with his grief and love,
Small heart was his after the Holy Quest:
If God would send the vision, well: if not,
The Quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

"And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors
Rode to the loneliest tract of all the realm,
And found a people there among their crags,
Our race and blood, a remnant that were left

Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
 They pitch up straight to heaven :
 and their wise men
 Were strong in that old magic which can trace
 The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him
 And this high Quest as at a simple thing :
 Told him he follow'd — almost Arthur's words —
 A mocking fire : 'what other fire than he,
 Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,
 And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd ?'
 And when his answer chafed them,
 the rough crowd,
 Hearing he had a difference with their priests,
 Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell
 Of great piled stones ; and lying bounden there
 In darkness thro' innumerable hours
 He heard the hollow-ringng heavens sweep
 Over him till by miracle — what else ? —
 Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,
 Such as no wind could move : and thro' the gap
 Glimmer'd the streaming scud : then came a night
 Still as the day was loud ; and thro' the gap
 The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round —
 For, brother, so one night, because they roll
 Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,
 Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King —
 And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,
 In on him shone : 'And then to me, to me,'

Said good Sir Bors, 'beyond all hopes of mine,
 Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself —
 Across the seven clear stars — O grace to me —
 In color like the fingers of a hand Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
 Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd A sharp quick thunder.' Afterwards, a maid,
 Who kept our holy faith among her kin
 In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk : "And I remember now
 That pelican on the casque : Sir Bors it was
 Who spake so low and sadly at our board ;
 And mighty reverent at our grace was he :
 A square-set man and honest ; and his eyes,
 An out-door sign of all the warmth within,
 Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a cloud,
 But heaven had meant it for a sunny one :
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else ? But when ye reach'd
 The city, found ye all your knights return'd,
 Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,
 Tell me, and what said each, and what the King ?"

Then answer'd Percivale : "And that can I,
 Brother, and truly ; since the living words
 Of so great men as Lancelot and our King
 Pass not from door to door and out again,
 But sit within the house. O, when we reach'd

The city, our horses stumbling as
they trode
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cock-
atrices,
And shatter'd talbots, which had left
the stones
Raw, that they fell from, brought us
to the hall.

" And there sat Arthur on the daïs
throne,
And those that had gone out upon the
Quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tith'e of
them,
And those that had not, stood before
the King,
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bade
me hail,
Saying, ' A welfare in thine eye re-
proves
Our fear of some disastrous chance
for thee
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding
ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of
late
Among the strange devices of our
kings;
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall
of ours,
And from the statue Merlin moulded
for us
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but
now — the Quest,
This vision — hast thou seen the Holy
Cup,
That Joseph brought of old to Glas-
tonbury ? '

" So when I told him all thyself
hast heard,
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt re-
solve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answer'd not, but, sharply turn-
ing, ask'd
Of Gawain, ' Gawain, was this Quest
for thee ? '

" Nay, lord,' said Gawain, ' not for
such as I .
Therefore I communed with a saintly
man,
Who made me sure the Quest was not
for me;
For I was much awearied of the
Quest:
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then
this gale
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-
pin,
And blew my merry maidens all
about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for
this,
My twelvemonth and a day were
pleasant to me.'

" He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to
whom at first
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,
push'd
Athwart the throng to Lancelot,
caught his hand,
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,
stood,
Until the King espied him, saying to
him,
' Hail, Bors ! if ever loyal man and
true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail ;'
and Bors,
' Ask me not, for I may not speak of
it:
I saw it ;' and the tears were in his
eyes.

" Then there remain'd but Lance-
lot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the
storm;
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy
Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the
last;
' Thou, too, my Lancelot,' ask'd the
King, ' my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd
for thee ? '

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lance-
lot, with a groan;
"O King!"—and when he paused,
methought I spied
A dying fire of madness in his eyes—
"O King, my friend, if friend of thine
I be,
Happier are those that welter in their
sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for
slime,
Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a
sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of
pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined
and clung
Round that one sin, until the whole-
some flower
And poisonous grew together, each as
each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when
thy knights
Sware, I swear with them only in the
hope
That could I touch or see the Holy
Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then
I speake
To one most holy saint, who wept and
said,
That save they could be pluck'd
asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to whom
I vow'd
That I would work according as he
will'd.
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd
and strove
To tear the twain asunder in my
heart,
My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far
away;
There was I beaten down by little
men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving
of my sword
And shadow of my spear had been
enow
To scare them from me once; and
then I came

All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse
grasses grew;
But such a blast, my King, began to
blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and
sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the
blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all
the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded
heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the
sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam
sway'd a boat,
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a
chain;
And in my madness to myself I said,
"I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my
sin."
I burst the chain, I sprang into the
boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary
deep,
And with me drove the moon and all
the stars;
And the wind fell, and on the seventh
night
I heard the shingle grinding in the
surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and
looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Car-
bonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the
sea,
And steps that met the breaker! there
was none
Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon
was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up
the stairs.
There drew my sword. With sudden-
flaring manes
Those two great beasts rose upright
like a man,

Each gript a shoulder, and I stood
between;
And, when I would have smitten
them, heard a voice,
"Doubt not, go forward; if thou
doubt, the beasts
Will tear thee piecemeal." Then with
violence
The sword was dash'd from out my
hand, and fell.
And up into the sounding hall I past;
But nothing in the sounding hall I
saw,
No bench nor table, painting on the
wall
Or shield of knight; only the rounded
moon
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
But always in the quiet house I heard,
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
A sweet voice singing in the topmost
tower
To the eastward: up I climb'd a thou-
sand steps
With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to
climb
For ever: at the last I reach'd a door,
A light was in the crannies, and I
heard,
"Glory and joy and honor to our
Lord
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail." Then in my madness I essay'd the
door;
It gave; and thro' a stormy glare, a
heat
As from a seventimes-heated furnace,
I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I
was,
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd
away—
O, yet methought I saw the Holy
Grail,
All pall'd in crimson samite, and
around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings
and eyes.
And but for all my madness and my
sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn
I saw

That which I saw; but what I saw
was veil'd
And cover'd; and this Quest was not
for me.'

"So speaking, and here ceasing,
Lancelot left
The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain
—nay,
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish
words,—
A reckless and irreverent knight was
he,
Now bolden'd by the silence of his
King,—
Well, I tell thee: 'O King, my
liege,' he said,
'Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of
thine?
When have I stinted stroke in fough-
ten field?
But as for thine, my good friend
Percivale,
Thy holy nun and thou have driven
men mad,
Yea, made our mightiest madder than
our least.
But by mine eyes and by mine ears I
swear,
I will be deafer than the blue-eyed
cat,
And thrice as blind as any noonday
owl,
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
Henceforward."

"'Deafer,' said the blameless
King,
'Gawain, and blinder unto holy
things
Hope not to make thyself by idle
vows,
Being too blind to have desire to see.
But if indeed there came a sign from
heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Per-
civale,
For these have seen according to
their sight.
For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the
bard,

When God make music thro' them,
could but speak
His music by the framework and the
chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken
truth.

" Nay — but thou arrest, Lancelot :
never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight
and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it
might be,
With such a closeness, but apart there
grew,
Save that he were the swine thou
spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure
nobleness ;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear
its flower.

" And spake I not too truly, O my
knights ?
Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy
Quest,
That most of them would follow
wandering fires,
Lost in the quagmire ? — lost to me
and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order — scarce return'd a
tithe —
And out of those to whom the vision
came

My greatest hardly will believe he
saw ;
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And leaving human wrongs to right
themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to
face,
And now his chair desires him here
in vain,
However they may crown him other-
where.

" And some among you held, that
if the King
Had seen the sight he would have
sworn the vow :

Not easily, seeing that the King must
guard
That which he rules, and is but as the
hind
To whom a space of land is given to
plow,
Who may not wander from the allot-
ted field
Before his work be done ; but, being
done,
Let visions of the night or of the
day
Come, as they will ; and many a time
they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems
not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is
not light,
This air that smites his forehead is
not air
But vision — yea, his very hand and
foot —
In moments when he feels he cannot
die,
And knows himself no vision to him-
self,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that
One
Who rose again : ye have seen what
ye have seen.'

" So spake the King : I knew not all
he meant."

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

KING ARTHUR made new knights to
fill the gap
Left by the Holy Quest ; and as he
sat
In the hall at old Caerleon, the high
doors
Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these
a youth,
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the
fields
Past, and the sunshine came along
with him.

" Make me thy knight, because I
know, Sir King,

All that belongs to knighthood, and I
love."

Such was his cry: for having heard
the King

Had let proclaim a tournament — the
prize

A golden circlet and a knightly sword,
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady
won

The golden circlet, for himself the
sword:

And there were those who knew him
near the King,

And promised for him: and Arthur
made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of
the isles —

But lately come to his inheritance,
And lord of many a barren isle was
he —

Riding at noon, a day or twain be-
fore,

Across the forest call'd of Dean, to
find

Caerleon and the King, had felt the
sun

Beat like a strong knight on his
helm, and reel'd

Almost to falling from his horse; but
saw

Near him a mound of even-sloping
side,

Whereon a hundred stately beeches
grew,

And here and there great hollies under
them;

But for a mile all round was open
space,

And fern and heath: and slowly Pel-
leas drew

To that dim day, then binding his
good horse

To a tree, cast himself down; and as
he lay

At random looking over the brown
earth

Thro' that green-glooming twilight of
the grove,

It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern
without

Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,

So that his eyes were dazzled looking
at it.

Then o'er it crost the dimness of a
cloud

Floating, and once, the shadow of a
bird

Flying, and then a fawn; and his
eyes closed.

And since he loved all maidens, but
no maid

In special, half-awake he whisper'd,
" Where ?

O where ? I love thee, tho' I know
thee not.

For fair thou art and pure as Guine-
vere,

And I will make thee with my spear
and sword

As famous — O my Queen, my Guine-
vere,

For I will be thine Arthur when we
meet."

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of
talk

And laughter at the limit of the wood,
And glancing thro' the hoary holes,
he saw,

Strange as to some old prophet might
have seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,
Damsels in divers colors like the cloud
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
On horses, and the horses richly trapt
Breast-high in that bright line of
bracken stood :

And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,
And one was pointing this way, and
one that,
Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,
And loosed his horse, and led him to
the right.

There she that seem'd the chief among
them said,

" In happy time behold our pilot-star !
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we
ride,

Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the
knights

There at Caerleon, but have lost our way:
To right? to left? straight forward?
back again?
Which? tell us quickly."

And Pelleas gazing thought,
" Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?"
For large her violet eyes look'd, and
her bloom
A rosy dawn kindled in stainless
heavens,
And round her limbs, mature in
womanhood;
And slender was her hand and small
her shape;
And but for those large eyes, the haunts
of scorn,
She might have seem'd a toy to trifle
with,
And pass and care no more. But
while he gazed
The beauty of her flesh abash'd the
boy,
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul:
For as the base man, judging of the
good,
Puts his own baseness in him by
default
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend
All the young beauty of his own soul
to hers,
Believing her; and when she spake
to him,
Stammer'd, and could not make her a
reply.
For out of the waste islands had he
come,
Where saving his own sisters he had
known
Scarce any but the women of his isles,
Rough wives, that laugh'd and
scream'd against the gulls,
Makers of nets, and living from the
sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the
lady round
And look'd upon her people; and as
when
A stone is flung into some sleeping
tarn,

The circle widens till it lip the marge,
Spread the slow smile thro' all her
company.
Three knights were thereamong; and
they too smil'd,
Scorning him; for the lady was
Ettarre,
And she was a great lady in her land

Again she said, " O wild and of the
woods,
Knowest thou not the fashion of our
speech?
Or have the Heavens but given thee
a fair face,
Lacking a tongue?"

" O damsel," answer'd he,
" I woke from dreams; and coming
out of gloom
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and
crave
Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I
Go likewise: shall I lead you to the
King?"

" Lead then," she said; and thro'
the woods they went.
And while they rode, the meaning in
his eyes,
His tenderness of manner, and chaste
awe,
His broken utterances and bashfulness,
Were all a burthen to her, and in her
heart
She mutter'd, " I have lighted on a
fool,
Raw, yet so stale!" But since her
mind was bent
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her
name
And title, " Queen of Beauty," in the
lists
Cried — and beholding him so strong,
she thought
That peradventure he will fight for
me,
And win the circlet: therefore flatter'd
him.
Being so gracious, that he wellnigh
deem'd

His wish by hers was echo'd; and her
knights
And all her damsels too were gracious
to him,
For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
Caerleon, ere they past to lodgings,
she,
Taking his hand, "O the strong hand,"
she said,
"See! look at mine! but wilt thou
fight for me,
And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,
That I may love thee?"

Then his helpless heart
Leapt, and he cried, "Ay! wilt thou
if I win?"
"Ay, that will I," she answer'd, and
she laugh'd,
And straitly nipt the hand, and flung
it from her;
Then glanced askew at those three
knights of hers,
Till all her ladies laugh'd along with
her.

"O happy world," thought Pelleas,
"all, messems,
Are happy; I the happiest of them
all."
Nor slept that night for pleasure in
his blood,
And green wood-ways, and eyes among
the leaves;
Then being on the morrow knighted,
sware
To love one only. And as he came
away,
The men who met him rounded on
their heels
And wonder'd after him, because his
face
Shone like the countenance of a priest
of old
Against the flame about a sacrifice
Kindled by fire from heaven: so glad
was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets,
and strange knights

From the four winds came in: and
each one sat,
Tho' served with choice from air, land,
stream, and sea,
Oft in mid-banquet measuring with
his eyes
His neighbor's make and might: and
Pelleas look'd
Noble among the noble, for he dream'd
His lady loved him, and he knew him-
self
Loved of the King: and him his new-
made knight
Worshipt, whose lightest whisper
moved him more
Than all the ranged reasons of the
world.

Then blush'd and brake the morn-
ing of the jousts,
And this was call'd "The Tournament
of Youth:"
For Arthur, loving his young knight,
withheld
His older and his mightier from the
lists,
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's
love,
According to her promise, and remain
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur
had the jousts
Down in the flat field by the shore of
Usk
Holden: the gilded parapets were
crown'd
With faces, and the great tower fill'd
with eyes
Up to the summit, and the trumpets
blew.
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept
the field
With honor: so by that strong hand
of his
The sword and golden circlet were
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved:
the heat
Of pride and glory fired her face; her
eye
Sparkled; she caught the circlet from
his lance,

And there before the people crown'd
herself :
So for the last time she was gracious
to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space — her
look
Bright for all others, cloudier on her
knight —
Linger'd Ettarre : and seeing Pelleas
droop,
Said Guinevere, " We marvel at thee
much,
O damsel, wearing this unsunny face
To him who won thee glory ! " And
she said,
" Had ye not held your Lancelot in
your bower,
My Queen, he had not won." Where-
at the Queen,
As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and
went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and
herself,
And those three knights all set their
faces home,
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw
him cried,
" Damsels — and yet I should be
shamed to say it —
I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back
Among yourselves. Would rather
that we had
Some rough old knight who knew the
worldly way,
Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride
And jest with : take him to you, keep
him off,
And pamper him with papmeat, if ye
will,
Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,
Such as the wholesome mothers tell
their boys.
Nay, should ye try him with a merry
one
To find his mettle, good : and if he fly
us,
Small matter ! let him." This her
damsels heard,

And mindful of her small and cruel
hand,
They, closing round him thro' the
journey home,
Acted her hest, and always from her
side
Restrain'd him with all manner of
device,
So that he could not come to speech
with her.
And when she gain'd her castle, up-
sprang the bridge,
Down rang the grate of iron thro' the
groove,
And he was left alone in open field.

" These be the ways of ladies,"
Pelleas thought,
" To those who love them, trials of
our faith.
Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,
For loyal to the uttermost am I."
So made his moan ; and, darkness
falling, sought
A priory not far off, there lodged, but
rose
With morning every day, and, moist
or dry,
Full-arm'd upon his charger all day
long
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to
him.

And this persistence turn'd her
scorn to wrath.
Then calling her three knights, she
charged them, " Out !
And drive him from the walls." And
out they came,
But Pelleas overthrew them as they
dash'd
Against him one by one ; and these
return'd,
But still he kept his watch beneath
the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate ;
and once,
A week beyond, while walking on the
walls
With her three knights, she pointed
downward, " Look,

He haunts me—I cannot breathe—
besieges me;
Down! strike him! put my hate into
your strokes.
And drive him from my walls." And
down they went,
And Pelleas overthrew them one by
one;
And from the tower above him cried
Ettarre,
"Bind him, and bring him in."

He heard her voice;
Then let the strong hand, which had
overthrown
Her minion-knights, by those he over-
threw
Be bounden straight, and so they
brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,
the sight
Of her rich beauty made him at one
glance
More bondsman in his heart than in
his bonds.
Yet with good cheer he spake, "Be-
hold me, Lady,
A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;
And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,
Content am I so that I see thy face
But once a day: for I have sworn my
vows,
And thou hast given thy promise, and
I know
That all these pains are trials of my
faith,
And that thyself, when thou hast seen
me strain'd
And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length
Yield me thy love and know me for
thy knight."

Then she began to rail so bitterly,
With all her damsels, he was stricken
mute;
But when she mock'd his vows and
the great King,
Lighted on words: "For pity of thine
own self,
Peace, Lady, peace: is he not thine
and mine?"

"Thou fool," she said, "I never heard
his voice
But long'd to break away. Unbind
him now,
And thrust him out of doors; for save
he be
Fool to the midmost marrow of his
bones,
He will return no more." And those,
her three,
Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him
from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again
She call'd them, saying, "There he
watches yet,
There like a dog before his master's
door!
Kick'd, he returns: do ye not hate
him, ye?
Ye know yourselves: how can ye bide
at peace,
Affronted with his fulsome innocence?
Are ye but creatures of the board and
bed,
No men to strike? Fall on him all at
once,
And if ye slay him I reck not: if ye fail,
Give ye the slave mine order 'to be
bound,
Bind him as heretofore, and bring him
in:
It may be ye shall slay him in his
bonds."

She spake; and at her will they
conch'd their spears,
Three against one: and Gawain pass-
ing by,
Bound upon solitary adventure, saw
Low down beneath the shadow of
those towers
A villainy, three to one: and thro' his
heart
The fire of honor and all noble deeds
Flash'd, and he call'd, "I strike upon
thy side—
The caitiffs!" "Nay," said Pelleas,
"but forbear;
He needs no aid who doth his lady's
will."

So Gawain, looking at the villany done,
Forebore, but in his heat and eagerness
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog,
 withheld
A moment from the vermin that he
 sees
Before him, shivers, ere he springs
 and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to
 three;
And they rose up, and bound, and
 brought him in.
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,
 burn'd
Full on her knights in many an evil
 name
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten
 hound:
" Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit
 to touch,
Far less to bind, your victor, and
 thrust him out,
And let who will release him from his
 bonds.
And if he comes again" — there she
 brake short;
And Pelleas answer'd, "Lady, for indeed
I loved you and I deem'd you beauti-
 ful,
I cannot brook to see your beauty
 marr'd
Thro' evil spite: and if ye love me not,
I cannot bear to dream you so for-
 sworn:
I had liefer ye were worthy of my
 love,
Than to be loved again of you — fare-
 well;
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my
 love,
Vex not yourself; ye will not see me
 more."

While thus he spake, she gazed
 upon the man
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds,
 and thought,
" Why have I push'd him from me?
 this man loves,

If love there be: yet him I loved not
 Why?
I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that
 in him
A something — was it nobler than my-
 self? —
Seem'd my reproach? He is not of
 my kin!.
He could not love me, did he know me
 well.
Nay, let him go — and quickly." And
 her knights
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden
 out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed
 him from his bonds,
And flung them o'er the walls; and
 afterward,
Shaking his hands, as from a lazars
 rag.
" Faith of my body," he said, " and
 art thou not —
Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur
 made
Knight of his table; yea and he that
 won
The circlet? wherefore hast thou so
 defamed
Thy brotherhood in me and all the
 rest,
As let these caitiffs on thee work their
 will?"

And Pelleas answer'd, "O, their
 wills are hers
For whom I won the circlet; and
 mine, hers,
Thus to be bounden, so to see her
 face,
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mock-
 ery now,
Other than when I found her in the
 woods;
And tho' she hath me bounden but in
 spite,
And all to flout me, when they bring
 me in,
Let me be bounden, I shall see her
 face;
Else must I die thro' mine unhappi-
 ness."

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho'
in scorn,
"Why, let my lady bind me if she
will,
And let my lady beat me if she will:
But an she send her delegate to thrall
These fighting hands of mine—Christ
kill me then
But I will slice him handless by the
wrist,
And let my lady sear the stump for
him,
Howl as he may. But hold me for
your friend:
Come, ye know nothing: here I pledge
my troth,
Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,
I will be leal to thee and work thy
work,
And tame thy jailing princess to
thine hand.
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I
will say
That I have slain thee. She will let
me in
To hear the manner of thy fight and
fall;
Then, when I come within her coun-
sels, then
From prime to vespers will I chant
thy praise
As prowest knight and truest lover,
more
Than any have sung thee living, till
she long
To have thee back in lusty life again,
Not to be bound, save by white bonds
and warm,
Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now
thy horse
And armor: let me go: be comforted:
Give me three days to melt her fancy,
and hope
The third night hence will bring thee
news of gold."

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all
his arms,
Saving the goodly sword, his prize,
and took
Gawain's, and said, "Betray me not,
but help —

Art thou not he whom men call light-
of-love?"

"Ay," said Gawain, "for women be
so light."
Then bounded forward to the castle
walls,
And raised a bugle hanging from his
neck,
And winded it, and that so musically
That all the old echoes hidden in the
wall
Rang out like hollow woods at hunt-
ing-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the
tower;
"Avaunt," they cried, "our lady loves
thee not."
But Gawain lifting up his vizor said,
"Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's
court,
And I have slain this Pelleas whom
ye hate:
Behold his horse and armor. Open
gates,
And I will make you merry."

And down they ran,
Her damsels, crying to their lady,
"Lo!
Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that
hath
His horse and armor: will ye let him
in?
He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the
court,
Sir Gawain—there he waits below the
wall,
Blowing his bugle as who should say
him nay."

And so, leave given, straight on
thro' open door
Rode Gawain, whom she greeted cour-
teously.
"Dead, is it so?" she ask'd. "Ay,
ay," said he,
"And oft in dying cried upon your
name."
"Pity on him," she answer'd, "a good
knight,

But never let me bide one hour at peace."

"Ay," thought Gawain, "and you be fair now:

But I to your dead man have given my troth,

'That whom ye loathe, him will I make you love.'

So those three days, aimless about the land,
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering
Waited, until the third night brought
a moon
With promise of large light on woods and ways.

Hot was the night and silent; but a sound
Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay—
Which Pelleas had heard sung before the Queen,
And seen heradden listening—vext his heart,
And marr'd his rest—"A worm within the rose."

"A rose, but one, none other rose had I,
A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous fair,
One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth and sky,
One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all mine air—
I cared not for the thorns; the thorns were there.

"One rose, a rose to gather by and by,
One rose, a rose, to gather and to wear,
No rose but one—what other rose had I?
One rose, my rose; a rose that will not die,—
He dies who loves it,—if the worm be there."

This tender rhyme, and evermore the doubt,

"Why lingers Gawain with his golden news?"

So shook him that he could not rest, but rode

Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his horse

Hard by the gates. Wide open were the gates,

And no watch kept; and in thro' these he past,

And heard but his own steps, and his own heart

Beating, for nothing moved but his own self,

And his own shadow. Then he crost the court,

And spied not any light in hall or bower,

But saw the postern portal also wide Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all Of roses white and red, and brambles mixt

And overgrowing them, went on, and found,

Here too, all hush'd below the mellow moon,

Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave Came lightening downward, and so spilt itself Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions rear'd

Above the bushes, gilden-peakt: in one, Red after revel, droned her lurdane knights

Slumbering, and their three squires across their feet:

In one, their malice on the placid lip Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her damsels lay:

And in the third, the circlet of the jousts

Bound on her brow, were Gawain and Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the leaf

To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew:

Back, as a coward slinks from what he fears

To cope with, or a traitor proven, or
hound
Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter sham:
Creep with his shadow thro' the court
again,
Fingering at his sword-handle until he
stood
There on the castle-bridge once more,
and thought,
"I will go back, and slay them where
they lie."

And so went back, and seeing them
yet in sleep
Said, "Ye, that so dishallow the holy
sleep,
Your sleep is death," and drew the
sword, and thought,
"What! slay a sleeping knight? the
King hath bound
And sworn me to this brotherhood;"
again,
"Alas that ever a knight should be
so false."
Then turn'd, and so return'd, and
groaning laid
The naked sword athwart their naked
throats,
There left it, and them sleeping; and
she lay,
The circlet of the tourney round her
brows,
And the sword of the tourney across her
throat.

And forth he past, and mounting
on his horse
Stared at her towers that, larger than
themselves
In their own darkness, throng'd into
the moon.
Then crush'd the saddle with his
thighs, and clenched
His hands, and madden'd with himself
and moan'd:

"Would they have risen against
me in their blood
At the last day? I might have an-
swer'd them
Even before high God. O towers so
strong,

Huge, solid, would that even while I
gaze
The crack of earthquake shivering to
your base
Split you, and Hell burst up your
harlot roofs
Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and
thro' within,
Black as the harlot's heart — hollow
as a skull!
Let the fierce east scream thro' your
eyelet-holes,
And whirl the dust of harlots round
and round
In dung and nettles! hiss, snake — I
saw him there —
Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell.
Who yells
Here in the still sweet summer night,
but I —
I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd
her fool?
Fool, beast — he, she, or I? myself
most fool;
Beast too, as lacking human wit —
disgraced,
Dishonor'd all for trial of true love —
Love? — we be all alike: only the
King
Hath made us fools and liars. O
noble vows!
O great and sane and simple race of
brutes
That own no lust because they have
no law!
For why should I have loved her to
my shame?
I loathe her, as I loved her to my
shame.
I never loved her, I but lusted for her —
Away — "

He dash'd the rowel into his
horse,
And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'
the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch
on her throat,
Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd
herself

To Gawain: "Liar, for thou hast not slain
This Pelleas! here he stood, and might have slain
Me and thyself." And he that tells the tale
Says that her ever-vpering fancy turn'd
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on earth,
And only lover; and thro' her love her life
Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half the night,
And over hard and soft, striking the sod
From out the soft, the spark from off the hard,
Rode till the star above the wakening sun,
Beside that tower where Percivale was cowld,
Glanced from the rosy forehead of the dawn.
For so the words were flash'd into his heart
He knew not whence or wherefore:
"O sweet star,
Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn!"
And there he would have wept, but felt his eyes
Harder and drier than a fountain bed
In summer: thither came the village girls
And linger'd talking, and they come no more
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from the heights
Again with living waters in the change
Of seasons: hard his eyes; harder his heart
Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs, that he,
Gasping, "Of Arthur's hall am I, but here,
Here let me rest and die," cast himself down,
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep; so lay,

Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired
The hall of Merlin, and the morning star
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame, and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some one nigh,
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him, crying,
"False! and I held thee pure as Guinevere."

But Percivale stood near him and replied
"Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or being one
Of our free-spoken Table hast not heard
That Lancelot"—there he check'd himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with one
Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword
That made it plunges thro' the wound again,
And pricks it deeper: and he shrank and wail'd,
"Is the Queen false?" and Percivale was mute.
"Have any of our Round Table held their vows?"
And Percivale made answer not a word.
"Is the King true?" "The King!" said Percivale.
"Why then let men couple at once with wolves.
What! art thou mad?

But Pelleas, leaping up,
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his horse
And fled: small pity upon his horse had he,
Or on himself, or any, and when he met

A cripple, one that held a hand for alms —
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old dwarf-elm
That turns its back on the salt blast, the boy
Paused not, but overrode him, shouting, "False,
And false with Gawain!" and so left him bruised
And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and wood
Went ever streaming by him till the gloom,
That follows on the turning of the world,
Darken'd the common path: he twitch'd the reins,
And made his beast that better knew it, swerve
Now off it and now on; but when he saw
High up in heaven the hall that Merlin built,
Blackening against the dead-green stripes of even,
"Black nest of rats," he groan'd, "ye build too high."

Not long thereafter from the city gates
Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
Warm with a gracious parting from the Queen,
Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star
And marvelling what it was: on whom the boy,
Across the silent seeded meadow-grass
Borne, clash'd: and Lancelot, saying,
"What name hast thou
That ridest here so blindly and so hard?"
"I have no name," he shouted, "a scourge am I,
To lash the treasons of the Table Round."
"Yea, but thy name?" "I have many names," he cried:
"I am wrath and shame and hate and evil fame,

And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast
And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the Queen."
"First over me," said Lancelot, "shalt thou pass."
"Fight therefore," yell'd the other, and either knight
Drew back a space, and when they closed, at once
The weary steed of Pelleas floundering flung
His rider, who call'd out from the dark field,
"Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I have no sword."
Then Lancelot, "Yea, between thy lips — and sharp;
But here will I disedge it by thy death."
"Slay then," he shriek'd, "my will is to be slain,"
And Lancelot, with his heel upon the fall'n,
Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then spake.
"Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say thy say."

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-horse back
To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while
Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark field,
And follow'd to the city. It chanced that both
Brake into hall together, worn and pale.
There with her knights and dames was Guinevere.
Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot
So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas, him
Who had not greeted her, but cast himself
Down on a bench, hard-breathing.
"Have ye fought?"
She ask'd of Lancelot. "Ay, my Queen," he said.

"And thou hast overthrown him?"
 "Ay, my Queen."

Then she, turning to Pelleas, "O young knight,
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in thee fail'd?
 So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,
 A fall from him?" Then, for he answer'd not,

"Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the Queen,
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and let me know."

But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce
 She quail'd; and he, hissing "I have no sword,"

Sprang from the door into the dark.
 The Queen
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her;
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to be:
 And all talk died, as in a grove all song
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey;
 Then a long silence came upon the hall,
 And Modred thought, "The time is hard at hand."

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his mood
 Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table Round,
 At Camelot, high above the yellowing woods,
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.
 And toward him from the hall, with harp in hand,
 And from the crown thereof a carcanet
 Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize
 Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,
 Came Tristram, saying, "Why skip ye so, Sir Fool?"

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once
 Far down beneath a winding wall of rock
 Heard a child wail. A stump of oak half dead,
 From roots like some black coil of carven snakes,
 Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid air
 Bearing an eagle's nest: and thro' the tree
 Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the wind
 Pierced ever a child's cry: and crag and tree
 Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous nest,
 This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,
 And all unscarr'd from beak or talon, brought
 A maiden babe; which Arthur pitying took,
 Then gave it to his Queen to rear: the Queen
 But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms
 Received, and after loved it tenderly,
 And named it Nestling; so forgot herself
 A moment, and her cares; till that young life
 Being smitten in mid heaven with mortal cold
 Past from her; and in time the carcanet
 Vext her with plaintive memories of the child:
 So she, delivering it to Arthur, said
 "Take thou the jewels of this dead innocence,
 And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-prize."

To whom the King, "Peace to thine eagle-borne
 Dead nestling, and this honor after death,
 Following thy will! but, O my Queen,
 I muse
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or zone

Those diamonds that I rescued from
the tarn,
And Lancelot won, methought, for
thee to wear."

"Would rather you had let them
fall," she cried,
"Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as
they were,
A bitterness to me! — ye look amazed,
Not knowing they were lost as soon
as given —
Slid from my hands, when I was leaning
out
Above the river — that unhappy child
Past in her barge: but rosier luck
will go
With these rich jewels, seeing that
they came
Not from the skeleton of a brother-
slayer,
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.
Perchance — who knows? — the pur-
est of thy knights
May win them for the purest of my
maids."

She ended, and the cry of a great
jousts
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the
ways
From Camelot in among the faded
fields
To furthest towers; and everywhere
the knights
Arm'd for a day of glory before the
King.

But on the hither side of that loud
morn
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage
ribb'd
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals,
his nose
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one
hand off,
And one with shatter'd fingers dan-
gling lame,
A churl, to whom indignantly the
King,

"My churl, for whom Christ died,
what evil beast
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy
face? or fiend?
Man was it who marr'd heaven's
image in thee thus?"

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of
splinter'd teeth,
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with
blunt stump
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said
the maim'd churl,

"He took them and he drove them
to his tower —
Some hold he was a table-knight of
thine —
A hundred goodly ones — the Red
Knight, he —
Lord, I war tending swine, and the
Red Knight
Brake in upon me and drove them to
his tower;
And when I call'd upon thy name as
one
That doest right by gentle and by
churl,
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would
outright have slain,
Save that he sware me to a message,
saying,
'Tell thou the King and all his liars,
that I
Have founded my Round Table in
the North,
And whatsoever his own knights have
sworn
My knights have sworn the counter
to it — and say
My tower is full of harlots, like his
court,
But mine are worthier, seeing they
profess
To be none other than themselves —
and say
My knights are all adulterers like his
own,
But mine are truer, seeing they pro-
fess
To be none other; and say his hour is
come,

The heathen are upon him, his long
lance
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw.'"

Then Arthur turned to Kay the
seneschal,
"Take thou my churl, and tend him
curiously
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be
whole.
The heathen — but that ever-climbing
wave,
Hurl'd back again so often in empty
foam,
Hath lain for years at rest — and
renegades,
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confu-
sion, whom
The wholesome realm is purged of
otherwhere,
Friends, thro' your manhood and your
fealty,— now
Make their last head like Satan in
the North.
My younger knights, new-made, in
whom your flower
Waits to be solid fruit of golden
deeds,
Move with me toward their quelling,
which achieved,
The loneliest ways are safe from
shore to shore.
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my
place
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the
field;
For wherefore shouldst thou care to
mingle with it,
Only to yield my Queen her own
again?
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it
well?"

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, "It
is well:
Yet better if the King abide, and
leave
The leading of his younger knights
to me.
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is
well."

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot fol-
low'd him,
And while they stood without the
doors, the King
Turn'd to him saying, "Is it then so
well?
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he
Of whom was written, 'A sound is in
his ears'?
The foot that loiters, bidden go,— the
glance
That only seems half-loyal to com-
mand,—
A manner somewhat fall'n from rever-
ence—
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our
knights
Tells of a manhood ever less and
lower?
Or whence the fear lest this my
realm, uprear'd,
By noble deeds at one with noble vows,
From flat confusion and brute vio-
lences,
Reel back into the beast, and be no
more?"

He spoke, and taking all his younger
knights,
Down the slope city rode, and sharply
turn'd
North by the gate. In her high bower
the Queen,
Working a tapestry, lifted up her
head,
Watch'd her Jord pass, and knew not
that she sigh'd.
Then ran across her memory the
strange rhyme
Of bygone Merlin, "Where is he who
knows?
From the great deep to the great
deep he goes."

But when the morning of a tourna-
ment,
By these in earnest those in mockery
call'd
The Tournament of the Dead Inno-
cence,
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lan-
celot,

Round whose sick head all night, like
birds of prey,
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd,
arose,
And down a streetway hung with folds
of pure
White samite, and by fountains run-
ning wine,
Where children sat in white with cups
of gold,
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow
sad steps
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd
chair.

He glanced and saw the stately gal-
leries,
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of
their Queen
White-robed in honor of the stainless
child,
And some with scatter'd jewels, like
a bank
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks
of fire.
He look'd but once, and vail'd his
eyes again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in
a dream
To ears but half-awaked, then one low
roll
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts
began:
And ever the wind blew, and yellow-
ing leaf
And gloom and gleam, and shower
and shorn plume
Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as
one
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,
When all the goodlier guests are past
away,
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er
the lists.
He saw the laws that ruled the
tournament
Broken, but spake not; once, a knight
cast down
Before his throne of arbitration
cursed

The dead babe and the follies of the
King;
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,
And show'd him, like a vermin in its
hole,
Modred, a narrow face: anon he heard
The voice that billow'd round the
barriers roar
An ocean-sounding welcome to one
knight,
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,
And armor'd all in forest green,
whereon
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
And wearing but a holly-spray for
crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on
shield
A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram
—late
From overseas in Brittany return'd,
And marriage with a princess of that
realm,
Isolt the White — Sir Tristram of the
Woods —
Whom Lancelot knew, had held some-
time with pain
His own against him, and now yearn'd
to shake
The burden off his heart in one full
shock
With Tristram ev'n to death: his
strong hands gript
And dinted the gilt dragons right and
left,
Until he groan'd for wrath — so many
of those,
That ware their ladies' colors on the
casque,
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the
bounds,
And there with gibes and flickering
mockeries
Stood, while he mutter'd, "Craven
crests! O shame!
What faith have these in whom they
swore to love?
The glory of our Round Table is no
more."

So Tristram won, and Lancelot
gave, the geins,

Not speaking other word than "Hast thou won?"
 Art thou the purest, brother? See, the hand
 Wherewith thou fakest this, is red!" to whom
 Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's languorous mood,
 Made answer, "Ay, but wherefore toss me this
 Like a dry bone cast to some hungry hound?
 Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy.
 Strength of heart
 And might of limb, but mainly use and skill,
 Are winners in this pastime of our King.
 My hand — belike the lance hath dript upon it —
 No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief knight,
 Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,
 Great brother, thou nor I have made the world;
 Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine."

And Tristram round the gallery made his horse Caracole; then bow'd his homage, bluntly saying, "Fair damsels, each to him who worships each Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold This day my Queen of Beauty is not here." And most of these were mute, some anger'd, one, Murmuring, "All courtesy is dead," and one, "The glory of our Round Table is no more."

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and mantle clung, And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day Went glooming down in wet and weariness:

But under her black brows a swarthy one Laugh'd shrilly, crying, "Praise the patient saints, Our one white day of Innocence hath past, Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt. So be it. The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the year, Would make the world as blank as Winter-tide. Come — let us gladden their sad eyes, our Queen's And Lancelot's at this night's solemnity With all the kindlier colors of the field."

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the feast
 Various gay: for he that tells the tale
 Liken'd them, saying, as when an hour of cold
 Falls on the mountain in midsummer snows,
 And all the purple slopes of mountain flowers
 Pass under white, till the warm hour returns
 With veer of wind, and all are flowers again;
 So dame and damsel cast the simple white,
 And glowing in all colors, the live grass,
 Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy, glanced
 About the revels, and with mirth so loud
 Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the Queen,
 And wroth at Tristram and the lawless jousts,
 Brake up their sports, then slowly to her bower
 Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.
 And little Dagonet on the morrow morn,
 High over all the yellowing Autumn-tide,

Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.
 Then Tristram saying, " Why skip ye so, Sir Fool ? "
 Wheeld round on either heel, Dagonet replied,
 " Belike for lack of wiser company ;
 Or being fool, and seeing too much wit
 Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip
 To know myself the wisest knight of all."
 " Ay, fool," said Tristram, but 'tis eating dry
 To dance without a catch, a roundelay
 To dance to." Then he twangled on his harp,
 And while he twangled little Dagonet stood
 Quiet as any water-sodden log
 Stay'd in the wandering warble of a brook ;
 But when the twangling ended, skipt again ;
 And being ask'd, " Why skip ye not, Sir Fool ? "
 Made answer, " I had liefer twenty years
 Skip to the broken music of my brains
 Than any broken music thou canst make."
 Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to come,
 " Good now, what music have I broken, fool ? "
 And little Dagonet, skipping, " Arthur, the King's ;
 For when thou playest that air with Queen Isolt,
 Thou makest broken music with thy bride,
 Her daintier namesake down in Brittany —
 And so thou breakest Arthur's music too."
 " Save for that broken music in thy brains,
 Sir Fool," said Tristram, " I would break thy head.
 Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were o'er,

The life had flown, we sware but by the shell —
 I am but a fool to reason with a fool —
 Come, thou art crabb'd and sour :
 but lean me down,
 Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses' ears,
 And harken if my music be not true.

" Free love — free field — we love but while we may :
 The woods are hush'd, their music is no more :
 The leaf is dead, the yearning past away :
 New leaf, new life — the days of frost are o'er :
 New life, new love, to suit the newer day :
 New loves are sweet as those that went before :
 Free love — free field — we love but while we may."

" Ye might have moved slow-measure to my tune,
 Not stood stockstill. I made it in the woods,
 And heard it ring as true as tested gold."

But Dagonet with one foot poised in his hand,
 " Friend, did ye mark that fountain yesterday
 Made to run wine ? — but this had run itself
 All out like a long life to a sour end —
 And them that round it sat with golden cups
 To hand the wine to whosoever came —
 The twelve small damosels white as Innocence,
 In honor of poor Innocence the babe,
 Who left the gems which Innocence the Queen
 Lent to the King, and Innocence the King
 Gave for a prize — and one of those white slips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,
 'Drink, drink, Sir Fool,' and there-upon I drank,
 Spat — pish — the cup was gold, the draught was mud."

And Tristram, "Was it muddier than thy gibes ?
 Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee ? —
 Not marking how the knighthood mock thee, fool —
 'Fear God: honor the King — his one true knight —
 Sole follower of the vows' — for here be they
 Who knew thee swine know before I came,
 Smuttier than blasted grain: but when the King
 Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up
 It frightened all free fool from out thy heart;
 Which left thee less than fool, and less than swine,
 A naked aught — yet swine I hold thee still,
 For I have flung thee pearls and find thee swine."

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet,
 "Knight, an ye fling those rubies round my neck
 In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast some touch
 Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.
 Swine ? I have wallow'd, I have wash'd — the world
 Is flesh and shadow — I have had my day.
 The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind
 Hath foul'd me — an I wallow'd, then I wash'd —
 I have had my day and my philosophies —
 And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's fool.

Swine, say ye ? swine, goats, asses, rams and geese
 Troop'd round a Paynim harper once, who thrummi'd
 On such a wire as musically as thou Some such fine song — but never a king's fool."

And Tristram, "Then were swine, goats, asses, geese
 The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard
 Had such a mastery of his mystery
 That he could harp his wife up out of hell."

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of his foot,
 "And whither harp'st thou thine ? down ! and thyself
 Down ! and two more : a helpful harper thou,
 That harpest downward ! Dost thou know the star
 We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven ?"

And Tristram, "Ay, Sir Fool, for when our King Was victor wellnigh day by day, the knights, Glorying in 'each new glory, set his name High on hills, and in the signs of heaven."

And Dagonet answer'd, "Ay, and when the land Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set yourself To babble about him, all to show your wit — And whether he were King by courtesy, Or King by right — and so went harping down The black king's highway, got so far, and grew So witty that ye play'd at ducks and drakes With Arthur's vows on the great lake of fire.

Tawhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the star?

"Nay, fool," said Tristram, "not in open day."
And Dagonet, "Nay, nor will I see it and hear.
It makes a silent music up in heaven,
And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,
And then we skip." "Lo, fool," he said, "ye talk
Fool's treason: is the King thy brother fool?"
Then little Dagonet clapt his hands
and shrill'd,
"Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of fools!
Conceits himself as God that he can make
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles,
milk
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-combs,
And men from beasts — Long live the king of fools!"

And down the city Dagonet danced away;
But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues
And solitary passes of the wood
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the west.
Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore
Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd, or flew.
Anon the face, as, when a gust hath blown,
Unruffling waters re-collect the shape
Of one that in them sees himself, return'd;
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,
Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode. At length

A lodge of intertwined beechen-boughs
Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft, the which himself
Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt
Against a shower, dark in the golden grove
Appearing, sent his fancy back to where
She lived a moon in that low lodge with him:
Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish King,
With six or seven, when Tristram was away,
And snatch'd her thence; yet dreading worse than shame
Her warrior Tristram, spake not any word,
But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram lookt
So sweet, that halting, in he past, and sank
Down on a drift of foliage random blown;
But could not rest for musing how to smoothe
And sleek his marriage over to the Queen.
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all
The tonguesters of the court she had not heard.
But then what folly had sent him overseas
After she left him lonely here? a name?
Was it the name of one in Brittany,
Isolt, the daughter of the King?
"Isolt
Of the white hands" they call'd her:
the sweet name
Allured him first, and then the maid herself,
Who served him well with those white hands of hers,
And loved him well, until himself had thought

He loved her also, wedded easily,
But left her all as easily and return'd.
The black-blue Irish hair and Irish
eyes
Had drawn him home — what marvel ?
then he laid
His brows upon the drifted leaf and
dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of
Brittany
Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,
And show'd them both the ruby-chain,
and both
Began to struggle for it, till his
Queen
Graspt it so hard, that all her hand
was red.
Then cried the Breton, "Look, her
hand is red !
These be no rubies, this is frozen
blood,
And melts within her hand — her
hand is hot
With ill desires, but this I gave thee,
look,
Is all as cool and white as any flower."
Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and
then
A whimpering of the spirit of the
child,
Because the twain had spoiled her
earcanet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a
hundred spears
Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,
And many a glancing plash and sal-
lowy isle,
The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty
marsh
Glared on a huge machicolated tower
That stood with open doors, where-
out was roll'd
A roar of riot, as from men secure
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their
ease
Among their harlot-brides, an evil
song.
"Lo there," said one of Arthur's
youth, for there,

High on a grim dead tree before the
tower,
A goodly brother of the Table Round
Swung by the neck : and on the
boughs a shield
Showing a shower of blood in a field
noir,
And there beside a horn, inflamed the
knights
At that dishonor done the gilded spur,
Till each would clash the shield, and
blow the horn.
But Arthur waved them back. Alone
he rode.
Then at the dry harsh roar of the
great horn,
That sent the face of all the marsh
aloft
An ever upward-rushing storm and
cloud
Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight
heard, and all,
Even to tipmost lance and top-
most helm,
In blood-red armor sallying, howl'd
to the King,

"The teeth of Hell flay bare and
gnash thee flat! —
Lo ! art thou not that eunuch-hearted
King
Who fain had clipt free manhood
from the world —
The woman-worshipper ? Yea, God's
curse, and I !
Slain was the brother of my para-
mour
By a knight of thine, and I that heard
her whine
And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
Sware by the scorpion-worm that
twists in hell,
And stings itself to everlasting death,
To hang whatever knight of thine I
fought
And tumbled. Art thou King ? —
Look to thy life !"
He ended : Arthur knew the voice;
the face
Weilnigh was helmet-hidden, and the
name

Went wandering somewhere darkling
in his mind.
And Arthur deign'd not use of word
or sword,
But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd
from horse
To strike him, overbalancing his
bulk,
Down from the causeway heavily to
the swamp
Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching
wave,
Heard in dead night along that table-
shore,
Drops flat, and after the great waters
break
Whitening for half a league, and thin
themselves,
Far over sands marbled with moon
and cloud,
From less and less to nothing; thus
he fell
Head-heavy; then the knights, who
watch'd him, roar'd
And shouted and leapt down upon the
fall'n;
There trampled out his face from
being known,
And sank his head in mire, and slimed
themselves:
Nor heard the King for their own
cries, but sprang
Thro' open doors, and swording right
and left
Men, women, on their sodden faces,
hurl'd
The tables over and the wines, and
slew
Till all the rafters rang with woman-
yells,
And all the pavement stream'd with
massacre:
Then, yell with yell echoing, they
fired the tower,
Which half that autumn night, like
the live North,
Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and
Alcor,
Made all above it, and a hundred
meres
About it, as the water Moab
saw

Come round by the East, and out be-
yond them flush'd
The long low dune, and lazy-plunging
sea.
So all the ways were safe from
shore to shore,
But in the heart of Arthur pain was
lord.
Then, out of Tristram waking, the
red dream
Fled with a shout, and that low lodge
return'd,
Mid-forest, and the wind among the
boughs.
He whistled his good warhorse left to
graze
Among the forest greens, vaulted
upon him,
And rode beneath an ever-showering
leaf,
Till one lone woman, weeping near a
cross,
Stay'd him. "Why weep ye?"
"Lord," she said, "my man
Hath left me or is dead;" whereon he
thought—
"What, if she hate me now? I
would not this.
"What, if she loves me still? I
would not that.
I know not what I would"—but said
to her,
"Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate
return,
He find thy favor changed and love
thee not"—
Then pressing day by day thro'
Lyonnese
Last in a rocky hollow, belling, heard
The hounds of Mark, and felt the
goodly hounds
Yelp at his heart, but turning, past
and gain'd
Tintagil, half in sea, and high on
land,
A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,
A low sea-sunset glorying round her
hair

And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the Queen.
 And when she heard the feet of Tristram grind
 The spiring stone that scaled about her tower,
 Flush'd, started, met him at the doors, and there
 Belted his body with her white embrace,
 Crying aloud, "Not Mark — not Mark, my soul !
 The footstep flutter'd me at first : not he :
 Catlike thro' his own castle steals my Mark,
 But warrior-wise thou stridest thro' his halls
 Who hates thee, as I him — ev'n to the death.
 My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark
 Quicken within me, and knew that thou wert nigh."
 To whom Sir Tristram smiling, "I am here.
 Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine."

And drawing somewhat backward she replied,
 "Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his own,
 But save for dread of thee had beaten me,
 Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me somehow — Mark ?
 What rights are his that dare not strike for them ?
 Not lift a hand — not, tho' he found me thus !
 But hearken ! have ye met him ? hence he went
 To-day for three days' hunting — as he said —
 And so returns belike within an hour.
 Mark's way, my soul ! — but eat not thou with Mark,
 Because he hates thee even more than fears ;
 Nor drink : and when thou passest any wood

Close vizor, lest an arrow from the bush
 Should leave me all alone with Mark and hell.
 My God, the measure of my hate for Mark
 Is as the measure of my love for thee."

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by love,
 Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and spake
 To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying,
 "O hunter, and O blower of the horn, Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,
 For, ere I mated with my shambling king,
 Ye twain had fallen out about the bride
 Of one — his name is out of me — the prize,
 If prize she were — (what marvel — she could see) —
 Thine, friend ; and ever since my craven seeks
 To wreck thee villainously : but, O Sir Knight,
 What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last ?"

And Tristram, "Last to my Queen Paramount,
 Here now to my Queen Paramount of love
 And loveliness — ay, lovelier than when first
 Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,
 Sailing from Ireland."

Softly laugh'd Isolt ;
 "Flatter me not, for hath not our great Queen
 My dole of beauty trebled ?" and he said,
 "Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,
 And thine is more to me — soft, gracious, kind —

Save when thy Mark is kindled on
thy lips
Most gracious; but she, haughty, ev'n
to him,
Lancelot; for I have seen him wan enow
To make one doubt if ever the great
Queen
Have yielded him her love."

To whom Isolt,
"Ah then, false hunter and false har-
per, thou
Who brakest thro' the scruple of my
bond,
Calling me thy white hind, and say-
ing to me
That Guinevere had sinn'd against
the highest,
And I—misyoked with such a want
of man—
That I could hardly sin against the
lowest."

He answer'd, "O my soul, be com-
forted!
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-
strings,
If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,
Crown'd warrant had we for the
crowning sin
That made us happy: but how ye
greet me—fear
And fault and doubt—no word of
that fond tale—
Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet
memories
Of Tristram in that year he was
away."

And, saddening on the sudden, spake
Isolt,
"I had forgotten all in my strong joy
To see thee—yearnings? — ay! for,
hour by hour,
Here in the never-ended afternoon,
O sweeter than all memories of thee,
Deeper than any yearnings after thee
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-
smiling seas.
Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of
Britain dash'd
Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,

Would that have chill'd her bride-
kiss? Wedded her?
Fought in her father's battles?
wounded there?
The King was all fulfill'd with grate-
fulness,
And she, my namesake of the hands,
that heal'd
Thy hurt and heart with unguent and
caress—
Well—can I wish her any huger
wrong
Than having known thee? her too
hast thou left
To pine and waste in those sweet
memories.
O were I not my Mark's, by whom all
men
Are noble, I should hate thee more
than love."

And Tristram, fondling her light
hands, replied,
"Grace, Queen, for being loved: she
loved me well.
Did I love her? the name at least I
loved.
Isolt? — I fought his battles, for Isolt!
The night was dark; the true star set.
Isolt!
The name was ruler of the dark —
Isolt?
Care not for her! patient, and prayer-
ful, meek,
Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to
God."

And Isolt answer'd, "Yea, and why
not I?
Mine is the larger need, who am not
meek,
Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell
thee now.
Here one black, mute midsummer
night I sat,
Lonely, but musing on thee, wonder-
ing where,
Murmuring a light song I had heard
thee sing,
And once or twice I spake thy name
aloud,

Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near
me stood,
In fuming sulphur blue and green, a
flend—
Mark's way to steal behind one in the
dark—
For there was Mark: 'He has wedded
her,' he said,
Not said, but hiss'd it: then this crown
of towers
So shook to such a roar of all the
sky,
That here in utter dark I swoon'd
away,
And woke again in utter dark, and
cried,
'I will flee hence and give myself to
God'—
And thou wert lying in thy new
leman's arms."

Then Tristram, ever dallying with
her hand,
"May God be with thee, sweet, when
old and gray,
And past desire!" a saying that
anger'd her.
"May God be with thee, sweet, when
thou art old,
And sweet no more to me!" I need
Him now.
For when had LanceLOT utter'd aught
so gross
Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the
mast?
The greater man, the greater courtesy.
Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's
knight!
But thou, thro' ever harrying thy
wild beasts—
Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a
lance
Becomes thee well—art grown wild
beast thyself.
How daarest thou, if lover, push me
even
In fancy from thy side, and set me
far
In the gray distance, half a life away,
Her to be loved no more? Unsay it,
unswear!
Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,

Broken with Mark and hate and soli-
tude,
Thy marriage and mine own, that I
should suck
Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I
believe.
Will ye not lie? not swear, as there
ye kneel,
And solemnly as when ye sware to
him,
The man of men, our King—My
God, the power
Was once in vows when men believed
the King!
They lied not then, who sware, and
thro' their vows
The King prevailing made his realm:
—I say,
Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n
when old,
Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in
despair."

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up
and down,
"Vows! did you keep the vow you
made to Mark
More than I mine? Lied, say ye?
Nay, but learnt,
The vow that binds too strictly snaps
itself—
My knighthood taught me this—ay,
being snapt—
We run more counter to the soul
thereof
Than had we never sworn. I swear
no more.
I swore to the great King, and am
forsworn.
For once—ev'n to the height—I
honor'd him.
'Man, is he man at all?' methought,
when first
I rode from our rough Lyonnese, and
held
That victor of the Pagan throned in
hall—
His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a
brow
Like hillsnow high in heaven, the
steel-blue eyes,

The golden beard that clothed his
lips with light—
Moreover, that weird legend of his
birth,
With Merlin's mystic babble about
his end
Amazed me; then, his foot was on a
stool
Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me
no man,
But Michaël trampling Satan; so I
sware,
Being amazed: but this went by—
The vows!
O ay—the wholesome madness of
an hour—
They served their use, their time; for
every knight
Believed himself a greater than him-
self,
And every follower eyed him as a God;
Till he, being lifted up beyond him-
self,
Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he
had done,
And so the realm was made; but
then their vows—
First mainly thro' that sullyng of
our Queen—
Began to gall the knighthood, asking
whence
Had Arthur right to bind them to
himself?
Dropt down from heaven? wash'd
up from out the deep?
They fail'd to trace him thro' the
flesh and blood
Of our old kings: whence then? a
doubtful lord
To bind them by inviolable vows,
Which flesh and blood perforce would
violate:
For feel this arm of mine—the tide
within
Red with free chase and heather-
scented air,
Pulsing full man; can Arthur make
me pure
As any maiden child? lock up my
tongue
From uttering freely what I freely
hear?

Bind me to one? The wide world
laughs at it.
And worldling of the world am I, and
know
The ptarmigan that whitens ere his
hour
Woos his own end; we are not angels
here
Nor shall be: vows—I am woodman
of the woods,
And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale
Mock them: my soul, we love but
while we may;
And therefore is my love so large for
thee,
Seeing it is not bounded save by
love."

Here ending, he moved toward her,
and she said,
"Good: an I turn'd away my love for
thee
To some one thrice as courteous as
thyself—
For courtesy wins women all as well
As valor may, but he that closes both
Is perfect, he is Lancelot—taller in-
deed,
Rosier and comelier, thou—but say I
loved
This knightliest of all knights, and
cast thee back
Thine own small saw, 'We love but
while we may,'
Well then, what answer?"

He that while she spake,
Mindful of what he brought to adorn
her with,
The jewels, had let one finger lightly
touch
The warm white apple of her throat,
replied,
"Press this a little closer, sweet,
until—
Come, I am hunger'd and half-an-
ger'd—meat,
Wine, wine—and I will love thee to
the death,
And out beyond into the dream to
come."

So then, when both were brought
to full accord,
She rose, and set before him all he
will'd;
And after these had comforted the
blood
With meats and wines, and satiated
their hearts —
Now talking of their woodland para-
dise,
The deer, the dews, the fern, the
founts, the lawns ;
Now mocking at the much ungainli-
ness,
And craven shifts, and long crane
legs of Mark —
Then Tristram laughing caught the
harp, and sang :

"Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that
bend the brier !
A star in heaven, a star within the
mere !
Ay, ay, O ay — a star was my desire,
And one was far apart, and one was
near :
Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bow
the grass !
And one was water and one star was
fire,
And one will ever shine and one will
pass.
Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that move
the mere."

Then in the light's last glimmer
Tristram show'd
And swung the ruby carcanet. She
cried,
"The collar of some Order, which
our King
Hath newly founded, all for thee, my
soul,
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond
thy peers."

"Not so, my Queen," he said, "but
the red fruit
Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-
heaven,
And won by Tristram as a tourney-
prize,

And hither brought by Tristram for
his last
Love-offering and peace-offering unto
thee."

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging
round her neck,
Claspt it, and cried "Thine Order, O
my Queen!"
But, while he bow'd to kiss the jew-
ell'd throat,
Out of the dark, just as the lips had
touch'd,
Behind him rose a shadow and a
shriek —
"Mark's way," said Mark, and clove
him thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and
while he climb'd,
All in a death-dumb autumn-drip-
ping gloom,
The stairway to the hall, and look'd
and saw
The great Queen's bower was dark, —
about his feet
A voice clung sobbing till he ques-
tion'd it,
"What art thou ?" and the voice
about his feet
Sent up an answer, sobbing, "I am
thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile
again."

GUINEVERE.

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,
and sat
There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little
maid,
A novice : one low light betwixt them
burn'd
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all
abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to
the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land
was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause
of flight
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle
beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the
throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance:
for this
He chill'd the popular praises of the
King
With silent smiles of slow disparage-
ment;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the
White Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left;
and sought
To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
Serving his traitorous end; and all
his aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for
Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when
all the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that
mock'd the may,
Had been, their wont, a-maying and
return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear
and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-
wall
To spy some secret scandal if he might,
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt
her best
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court
The wiliest and the worst; and more
than this
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing
by
Spied where he crouch'd, and as the
gardener's hand
Picks from the colewort a green cater-
pillar,
So from the high wall and the flower-
ing grove
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by
the heel,
And cast him as a worm upon the way;
But when he knew the Prince tho'
marr'd with dust,

He, reverencing king's blood in a bad
man,
Made such excuses as he might, and
these
Full knightly without scorn; for in
those days
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt
in scorn;
But, if a man were halt or hunch'd,
in him
By those whom God had made full-
limb'd and tall,
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,
And he was answer'd softly by the King
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot
help
To raise the Prince, who rising twice
or thrice
Full sharply smote his knees, and
smiled, and went:
But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day
long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she
laugh'd
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fail,
Then shudder'd, as the village wife
who cries
"I shudder, some one steps across my
grave;"
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for
indeed
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle
beast,
Would track her guilt until he found,
and hers
Would be forevermore a name of scorn.
Henceforward rarely could she front
in hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy
face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persis-
tent eye:
Henceforward too, the Powers that
tend the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot
die,

And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time
for hours,
Beside the placid breathings of the
King,
In the dead night, grim faces came
and went
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted
house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the
walls—
Held her awake: or if she slept, she
dream'd
An awful dream; for then she seem'd
to stand
On some vast plain before a setting
sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made
at her
A ghastly something, and its shadow
flew
Before it, till it touch'd her, and she
turn'd—
Where lo! her own, that broadening
from her feet,
And blackening, swallow'd all the
land, and in it
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she
woke.
And all this trouble did not pass but
grew;
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless
King,
And trustful courtesies of household
life,
Became her bane; and at the last she
said,
“O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine
own land.
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
And if we meet again, some evil chance
Will make the smouldering scandal
break and blaze
Before the people, and our lord the
King.”
And Lancelot ever promised, but re-
main'd,
And still they met and met. Again
she said,

“O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee
hence.”
And then they were agreed upon a
night
(When the good King should not be
there) to meet
And part for ever. Passion-pale they
met
And greeted: hands in hands, and eye
to eye,
Low on the border of her couch they
sat
Stammering and staring: it was their
last hour,
A madness of farewells. And Modred
brought
His creatures to the basement of the
tower
For testimony; and crying with full
voice
“Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at
last,” aroused
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him head-
long, and he fell
Stunn'd, and his creatures took and
bare him off,
And all was still: then she, “The end
is come,
And I am shamed for ever;” and he
said,
“Mine be the shame; mine was the
sin: but rise,
And fly to my strong castle overseas:
There will I hide thee, till my life
shall end,
There hold thee with my life against
the world.”
She answer'd, “Lancelot, wilt thou
hold me so?
Nay, friend, for we have taken our
farewells.
Would God that thou couldst hide me
from myself!
Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and
thou
Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,
For I will draw me into sanctuary,
And bide my doom.” So Lancelot
got her horse,
Set her thereon, and mounted on his
own,

And then they rode to the divided way,
There kiss'd, and parted weeping : for
he past,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the
Queen,
Back to his land ; but she to Almes-
bury
Fled all night long by glimmering
waste and weald,
And heard the spirits of the waste
and weald
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard
them moan :
And in herself she moan'd " Too late,
too late !"
Till in the cold wind that foreruns the
morn,
A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying
high,
Croak'd, and she thought, " He spies
a field of death ;
For now the Heathen of the Northern
Sea,
Lured by the crimes and frailties of
the court,
Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the
land."

And when she came to Almesbury
she spake
There to the nuns, and said, " Mine
enemies
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor
ask
Her name to whom ye yield it, till her
time
To tell you :" and her beauty, grace
and power,
Wrought as a charm upon them, and
they spared
To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
For many a week, unknown, among
the nuns ;
Nor with them mix'd, nor told her
name, nor sought,
Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for
shrift,
But communed only with the little
maid,

Who pleased her with a babbling
heedlessness
Which often lured her from herself ;
but now,
This night, a rumor wildly blown
about
Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd
the realm,
And leagued him with the heathen,
while the King
Was waging war on Lancelot : then
she thought,
" With what a hate the people and
the King
Must hate me," and bow'd down upon
her hands
Silent, until the little maid, who
brook'd
No silence, brake it, uttering " Late !
so late !
What hour, I wonder, now ? " and when
she drew
No answer, by and by began to hum
An air the nuns had taught her ;
" Late, so late !"
Which when she heard, the Queen
look'd up, and said,
" O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may
weep."
Whereat full willingly sang the little
maid.

" Late, late, so late ! and dark the
night and chill !
Late, late, so late ! but we can enter
still.
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter
now.

" No light had we : for that we do
repent ;
And learning this, the bridegroom
will relent.
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter
now.

" No light : so late ! and dark
and chill the night !
O let us in, that we may find the light !
Too late, too late : ye cannot enter
now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom
is so sweet?
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter
now."

So sang the novice, while full passionately,
Her head upon her hands, remembering
Her thought when first she came,
wept the sad Queen.
Then said the little novice prattling
to her,

"O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
But let my words, the words of one
so small,
Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,
And if I do not there is penance given—
Comfort your sorrows; for they do not flow
From evil done; right sure I am of that,
Who see your tender grace and statelessness.
But weigh your sorrows with our lord
the King's,
And weighing find them less; for gone is he
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,
Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen;
And Modred whom he left in charge of all,
The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the King's grief
For his own self, and his own Queen,
and realm,
Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.
For me, I thank the saints, I am not great.
For if there ever come a grief to me
I cry my cry in silence, and have done.
None knows it, and my tears have brought me good:
But even were the griefs of little ones

As great as those of great ones, yet
this grief
Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
That howsoever much they may desire
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud:
As even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good King and his wicked Queen,
And were I such a King with such a Queen,
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
But were I such a King, it could not be."

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen,
"Will the child kill me with her innocent talk?"
But openly she answer'd, "Must not I,
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm?"

"Yea," said the maid, "this is all woman's grief,
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders,
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen."

Then thought the Queen within herself again,
"Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?"
But openly she spake and said to her,
"O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?"

To whom the little novice garrulously,
 "Yea, but I know: the land was full
 of signs
 And wonders ere the coming of the
 Queen.
 So said my father, and himself was
 knight
 Of the great Table—at the founding
 of it;
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse,
 and he said
 That as he rode, an hour or maybe
 twain
 After the sunset, down the coast, he
 heard
 Strange music, and he paused, and
 turning—there,
 All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
 Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
 And with a wild sea-light about his feet,
 He saw them—headland after head-
 land flame
 Far on into the rich heart of the west:
 And in the light the white mermaiden
 swam,
 And strong man-breasted things stood
 from the sea,
 And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the
 land,
 To which the little elves of chasm and
 cleft
 Made answer, sounding like a distant
 horn.
 So said my father—yea, and further-
 more,
 Next morning, while he past the dim-
 lit woods,
 Himself beheld three spirits mad with
 joy
 Come dashing down on a tall wayside
 flower,
 That shook beneath them, as the this-
 tle shakes
 When three gray linnets wrangle for
 the seed:
 And still at evenings on before his
 horse
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and
 broke
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd
 and broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.
 And when at last he came to Camelot,
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
 Swung round the lighted lantern of
 the hall;
 And in the hall itself was such a feast
 As never man had dream'd; for every
 knight
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd for
 served
 By hands unseen; and even as he said
 Down in the cellars merry bloated
 things
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on
 the butts
 While the wine ran: so glad were
 spirits and men
 Before the coming of the sinful
 Queen."

Then spake the Queen and some-
 what bitterly,
 "Were they so glad? ill prophets
 were they all,
 Spirits and men: could none of them
 foresee,
 Not even thy wise father with his signs
 And wonders, what has fall'n upon
 the realm?"

To whom the novice garrulously
 again,
 "Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father
 said,
 Full many a noble war-song had he
 sung,
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's
 fleet,
 Between the steep cliff and the com-
 ing wave;
 And many a mystic lay of life and
 death
 Had chanted on the smoky mountain-
 tops,
 When round him bent the spirits of
 the hills
 With all their dewy hair blown back
 like flame:
 So said my father—and that night
 the bard
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and
 sang the King

As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd
at those
Who call'd him the false son of Gor-
lois :
For there was no man knew from
whence he came ;
But after tempest, when the long
wave broke
All down the thundering shores of
Bude and Bos,
There came a day as still as heaven,
and then
They found a naked child upon the
sands
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea ;
And that was Arthur ; and they fos-
ter'd him
Till he by miracle was approven King :
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth ; and
could he find
A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then, he
sang,
The twain together well might change
the world.
But even in the middle of his song
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the
harp,
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and
would have fall'n,
But that they stay'd him up ; nor
would he tell
His vision ; but what doubt that he
foresaw
This evil work of Lancelot and the
Queen ? ”

Then thought the Queen, “ Lo !
they have set her on,
Our simple-seeming Abbess and her
nuns,
To play upon me,” and bow'd her
head nor spake.
Whereat the novice crying, with
clasp'd hands,
Shame on her own garrulity garru-
lously,
Said the good nuns would check her
gadding tongue
Full often, “ and, sweet lady, if I seem
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,

Unmannerly, with prattling and the
tales
Which my good father told me, check
me too
Nor let me shame my father's mem-
ory, one
Of noblest manners, tho' himself
would say
Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he
died,
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five sum-
mers back,
And left me ; but of others who remain,
And of the two first-famed for
courtesy —
And pray you check me if I ask
amiss —
But pray you, which had noblest,
while you moved
Among them, Lancelot or our lord
the King ? ”

Then the pale Queen look'd up and
answer'd her,
“ Sir Lancelot, as became a noble
knight,
Was gracious to all ladies, and the
same
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and the
King
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and these
two
Were the most nobly-manner'd men
of all ;
For manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.”

“ Yea,” said the maid, “ be manners
such fair fruit ?
Then Lancelot's needs must be a thou-
sand-fold
Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
The most disloyal friend in all the
world.”

To which a mournful answer made
the Queen :
“ O closed about by narrowing nun-
nery-walls,

What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,
 And weep for her who drew him to his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray for both;
 But I should all as soon believe that his,
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be
 Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt
 Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would heal;
 For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried,
 "Such as thou art be never maiden more
 For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague
 And play upon, and harry me, petty spy
 And traitress." When that storm of anger brake
 From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,
 White as her veil, and stood before the Queen
 As tremulously as foam upon the beach
 Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
 And when the Queen had added "Get thee hence,"
 Fled frightened. Then that other left alone

Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,
 Saying in herself, "The simple, fearful child
 Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,
 Simpler than any child, betrays itself. But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.
 For what is true repentance but in thought—
 Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again
 The sins that made the past so pleasant to us:
 And I have sworn never to see him more,
 To see him more."

And ev'n in saying this, Her memory from old habit of the mind
 Went slipping back upon the golden days
 In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,
 Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,
 Ambassador, to lead her to his lord Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
 Of his and her retinue moving, they, Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
 And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the time
 Was maytime, and as yet no sin was dream'd,) Rode under groves that look'd a paradise
 Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth That seem'd the heavens upbreaking thro' the earth,
 And on from hill to hill, and every day Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
 The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
 For brief repast or afternoon repose By couriers gone before; and on again, Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw

The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship,
That crown'd the state pavilion of the
King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent
well.

But when the Queen immersed in
such a trance,
And moving thro' the past uncon-
sciously,
Came to that point where first she
saw the King
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd
to find
Her journey done, glanced at him,
thought him cold,
High, self-contain'd, and passionless,
not like him,
"Not like my LanceLOT"—while she
brooded thus
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts
again,
There rode an armed warrior to the
doors.
A murmuring whisper thro' the nun-
nery ran,
Then on a sudden a cry "The King."
She sat
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when
armed feet
Thro' the long gallery from the outer
doors
Rang coming, prone from off her seat
she fell,
And grovell'd with her face against
the floor:
There with her milkwhite arms and
shadowy hair
She made her face a darkness from
the King:
And in the darkness heard his armed
feet
Pause by her; then came silence, then
a voice,
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but tho'
changed, the King's:

"Liest thou here so low, the child
of one

I honor'd, happy, dead before thy
shame?
Well is it that no child is born of
thee.
The children born of thee are sword
and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of
laws.
The craft of kindred and the Godless
hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern
Sea;
Whom I, while yet Sir LanceLOT, my
right arm
The mightiest of my knights, abode
with me,
Have everywhere about this land of
Christ
In twelve great battles ruining over-
thrown.
And knowest thou now from whence
I come—from him,
From waging bitter war with him:
and he,
That did not shun to smite me in
worse way,
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him
left,
He spared to lift his hand against the
King
Who made him knight: but many a
knight was slain;
And many more, and all his kith and
kin
Clave to him, and abode in his own
land.
And many more when Modred raised
revolt,
Forgetful of their troth and fealty,
clave
To Modred, and a remnant stays with
me.
And of this remnant will I leave a
part,
True men who love me still, for whom
I live,
To guard thee in the wild hour coming
on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be
harm'd.
Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till
my death.

Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
Have err'd not, that I march to meet
my doom.
Thou hast not made my life so sweet
to me,
That I the King should greatly care
to live;
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of
my life.
Bear with me for the last time while
I show,
Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou
hast sinn'd.
For when the Roman left us, and
their law
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the
ways
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there
a deed
Of prowess done redress'd a random
wrong.
But I was first of all the kings who
drew
The knighthood-errant of this realm
and all
The realms together under me, their
Head,
In that fair Order of my Table Round,
A glorious company, the flower of
men,
To serve as model for the mighty
world,
And be the fair beginning of a time.
I made them lay their hands in mine
and swear
To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience
as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the
Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human
wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to
it,
To honor his own word as if his God's,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to
her,
And worship her by years of noble
deeds,
Until they won her; for indeed I
knew

Of no more subtle master under
heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a
maid,
Not only to keep down the base in
man,
But teach high thought, and amiable
words
And courtliness, and the desire of
fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes
a man.
And all this thrrove before I wedded
thee,
Believing, 'lo mine helpmate, one to
feel
My purpose and rejoicing in my
joy.'
Then came thy shameful sin with
Lancelot;
Then came the sin of Tristram and
Isolt;
Then others, following these my
mightyest knights,
And drawing foul ensample from fair
names,
Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite
Of all my heart had destined did ob-
tain,
And all thro' thee! so that this life of
mine
I guard as God's high gift from seathe
and wrong,
Not greatly care to lose; but rather
think
How sad it were for Arthur, should he
live,
To sit once more within his lonely
hall,
And miss the wonted number of my
knights,
And miss to hear high talk of noble
deeds
As in the golden days before thy sin.
For which of us, who might be left,
could speak
Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance
at thee?
And in thy bowers of Camelot or of
Usk
Thy shadow still would glide from
room to room,

And I should evermore be vexed with thee
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
 For think not, tho' thou wouldest not love thy lord,
 Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee,
 I am not made of so slight elements.
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.
 I hold that man the worst of public foes
 Who either for his own or children's sake,
 To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
 Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house:
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
 She like a new disease, unknown to men,
 Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.
 Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns!
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart
 Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
 The mockery of my people, and their bane."

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
 Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neigh'd
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

" Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on the fierce law,
 The doom of treason and the flaming death,
 (When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.
 The pang — which while I weigh'd thy heart with one
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
 Made my tears burn — is also past — in part.
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I, Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.
 But how to take last leave of all I loved?
 O golden hair, with which I used to play
 Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,
 And beauty such as never woman wore,
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee —
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
 But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the King's.
 I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own flesh,
 Here looking down on thine polluted, cries
 'I loathe thee:' yet not less, O Guinevere,
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
 So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.

Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
 And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
 Hereafter in that world where all are pure
 We two may meet before high God, and thou
 Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
 I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,
 Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.
 Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow:
 They summon me their King to lead mine hosts
 Far down to that great battle in the west,
 Where I must strike against the man they call
 My sister's son — no kin of mine, who leagues
 With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,
 Traitors — and strike him dead, and meet myself
 Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
 And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;
 But hither shall I never come again,
 Never lie by thy side; see thee no more —
 Farewell!"

And while she grovell'd at his feet,
 She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,
 And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,
 Perceived the waving of his hands that bled.

Then, listening till those armed steps were gone,

Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found
 The easement: "peradventure," so she thought,
 "If I might see his face, and not be seen."
 And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!
 And near him the sad nuns with each a light
 Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,
 To guard and foster her for evermore.
 And while he spake to these his helm was lower'd,
 To which for crest the golden dragon elung
 Of Britain; so she did not see the face, Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,
 Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
 The Dragon of the great Pendragon-ship
 Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.
 And even then he turn'd; and more and more
 The moony vapor rolling round the King,
 Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,
 Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
 And grayer, till himself became as mist Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and cried aloud
 "Oh Arthur!" there her voice brake suddenly,
 Then — as a stream that spouting from a cliff
 Fails in mid air, but gathering at the base
 Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale —
 Went on in passionate utterance:

"Gone — my lord!
 Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!

And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
 Farewell ? I should have answer'd his farewell.
 His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,
 My own true lord ! how dare I call him mine ?
 The shadow of another cleaves to me, And makes me one pollution : he, the King,
 Call'd me polluted : shall I kill myself ?
 What help in that ? I cannot kill my sin,
 If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my shame ;
 No, nor by living can I live it down. The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
 The months will add themselves and make the years,
 The years will roll into the centuries, And mine will ever be a name of scorn. I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
 Let the world be ; that is but of the world
 What else ? what hope ? I think there was a hope,
 Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope ;
 His hope he call'd it ; but he never mocks,
 For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
 And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven
 My wickedness to him, and left me hope
 That in mine own heart I can live down sin
 And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
 Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
 Among his warring senses, to thy knights —
 To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took

Full easily all impressions from below,
 Would not look up, or half-despised the height
 To which I would not or I could not climb —
 I thought I could not breathe in that fine air
 That pure severity of perfect light —
 I wanted warmth and color which I found
 In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou art,
 Thou art the highest and most human too,
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late ?
 Now — ere he goes to the great Battle ? none :
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
 What might I not have made of thy fair world,
 Had I but loved thy highest creature here ?
 It was my duty to have loved the highest :
 It surely was my profit had I known :
 It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
 We needs must love the highest when we see it,
 Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes : she look'd and saw The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her, " Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven ? " Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns All round her, weeping ; and her heart was loosed Within her, and she wept with these and said,

"Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke
 The vast design and purpose of the King.
 O shut me round with narrowing nunnery walls,
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying 'shame.'
 I must not scorn myself: he loves me still.
 Let no one dream but that he loves me still.
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me,
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;
 Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,
 But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;
 Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your shrines;
 Do each low office of your holy house;
 Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dote
 To poor sick people, richer in His eyes

End of "The Round Table."

Who ransom'd us, and hale too than I;
 And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own;
 And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer
 The sombre close of that voluptuous day,
 Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King."

She said: they took her to themselves; and she
 Still hoping, fearing "is it yet too late?"
 Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess died.
 Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,
 And for the power of ministration in her,
 And likewise for the high rank she had borne,
 Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess, lived
 For three brief years, and there, an Abbess, past
 To where beyond these voices there is peace.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
 First made and latest left of all the knights,
 Told, when the man was no more than a voice
 In the white winter of his age, to those
 With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

For on their march to westward,
 Bedivere,
 Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,
 Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:

"I found Him in the shining of the stars,
 I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,
 But in His ways with men I find Him not.
 I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
 O me! for why is all around us here
 As if some lesser god had made the world,
 But had not force to shape it as he would,
 Till the High God behold it from beyond,
 And enter it, and make it beautiful!"

Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
 But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
 And have not power to see it as it is :
 Perchance, because we see not to the close ; —
 For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
 And have but stricken with the sword in vain ;
 And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
 Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
 Reels back into the beast, and is no more.
 My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death :
 Nay — God my Christ — I pass but shall not die." X

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west,
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawan kill'd
 In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawan blown
 Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
 Went shrilling, " Hollow, hollow all delight !
 Hail, King ! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
 Farewell ! there is an isle of rest for thee.
 And I am blown along a wandering wind,
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight."
 And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
 Their season in the night and wail their way
 From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream
 Shrill'd ; but in going mingled with dim cries
 Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
 As of some lonely city sack'd by night,

When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
 Pass to new lords ; and Arthur woke and call'd,
 " Who spake ? A dream. O light upon the wind,
 Thine, Gawnin, was the voice — are these dim cries
 Thine ? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
 Mourn, knowing it will go along with me ? "

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake :
 " O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
 Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field ;
 But in their stead thy name and glory cling
 To all high places like a golden cloud
 For ever : but as yet thou shalt not pass.
 Light was Gawan in life, and light in death
 Is Gawan, for the ghost is as the man ;
 And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise —
 I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
 And with him many of thy people, and knights
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
 Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
 " Far other is this battle in the west
 Whereto we move, than when we strove in youth,
 And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,

And shook him thro' the north. Ill
doom is mine
To war against my people and my
knights.
The king who fights his people fights
himself.
And they my knights, who loved me
once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death
to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a
way
Thro' this blind haze, which ever
since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the
world."

Then rose the King and moved his
host by night,
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league
by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyon-
nesse —
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples
dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a
coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no
more,
And he that fled no further fly the
King;
And there, that day when the great
light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling
year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea
they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a
fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the
west.
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and
sea :
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed
it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart
was cold

With formless fear; and ev'n on
Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he
fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in
the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing
whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden
youth,
And some beheld the faces of old
ghosts.
Look in upon the battle; and in the
mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in
single fights,
And ever and anon with host to
host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the
hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of
brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and
shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling
down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw
the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor
knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous
blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of
the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the
light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the
dead. X

Last, as by some one deathbed after
wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro'
death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that
shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething
seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous
day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling,
came

A bitter wind, clear from the North,
and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced
across the field
Of battle: but no man was moving
there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard
thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan
wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up
and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had
fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that
shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon
we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died
for me? —
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath
fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be
King.
Behold, I seem but King among the
dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere:
"My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead
have kings,
There also will I worship thee as King.

Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee,
he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unarm'd, the traitor of thine house."

Then spake the King: "My house hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who swear my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me King.
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for King.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this the King
Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,



*"An arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword."*

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.



And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land :
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full. X

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
“The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights

Whereof this world holds record.
Such a sleep

They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we

Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls

Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin swore that I should come again

To rule once' more ; but, let what will be, be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,

Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how

In those old days, one summer noon,
an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

Holding the sword — and how I row'd across

And took it, and have worn it, like a king ;

And, wheresoever I am sung or told

In aftertime, this also shall be known :
But now delay not : take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere :

Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.”

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :

“ It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm —

A little thing may harm a wounded man ;

Yet I thy best will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.”

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,

And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down

By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,

Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :

For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work

Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long

That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,

In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,

That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave ?
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as seem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud :

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done ?
What harm, undone ? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself ?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt ? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.' So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And bid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :
"What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the
reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur,
much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is
me!"

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what
thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my
knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the pre-
cious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the
eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get
thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my
hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere,
and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd
the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it.
The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of
the moon,
And flashing round and round, and
whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern
morn,
Seen where the moving isles of win-
ter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern
Sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Ex-
calibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an
arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.
And lightly went the other to the
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing
thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is
done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard,
or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bed-
ivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest
the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never
saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till
I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal
men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him,
wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an
arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,
That caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in
the mere."

And answer made King Arthur,
breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that
I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive
my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I
fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I
shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he
half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his
arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
 And would have spoken, but he found
 not words ;
 Then took with care, and kneeling on
 one knee,
 O'er both his shoulders drew the lan-
 guid hands,
 And rising bore him thro' the place
 of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur
 panted hard,
 Like one that feels a nightmare on
 his bed
 When all the house is mute. So
 sigh'd the King,
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
 "Quick, quick !
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
 But the other swiftly strode from
 ridge to ridge,
 Clothed with his breath, and looking,
 as he walk'd,
 Larger than human on the frozen
 hills.
 He heard the deep behind him, and a
 cry
 Before. His own thought drove him
 like a goad.
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
 caves
 And barren chasms, and all to left
 and right
 The bare black cliff clang'd round
 him, as he based
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that
 rang
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
 heels —
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
 And the long glories of the winter
 moon.

Then saw they how there hove a
 dusky barge,
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to
 stern,
 Beneath them; and descending they
 were ware

That all the decks were dense with
 stately forms,
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a
 dream — by these
 Three Queens with crowns of gold:
 and from them rose
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
 stars,
 And, as it were one voice, an agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind that
 shrills
 All night in a waste land, where no
 one comes,
 Or hath come, since the making of
 the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me
 in the barge."
 So to the barge they came. There
 those three Queens
 Put forth their hands, and took the
 King, and wept.
 But she, that rose the tallest of them
 all
 And fairest, laid his head upon her
 lap,
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and
 chased his hands,
 And call'd him by his name, complain-
 ing loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against a
 brow
 Striped with dark blood : for all his
 face was white
 And colorless, and like the wither'd
 moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the
 springing east;
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
 with drops
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous
 curls —
 That made his forehead like a rising
 sun
 High from the dais-throne — were
 parch'd with dust,
 Or, clotted into points and hanging
 loose,
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that
 fringed his lips.
 So like a shatter'd column lay the
 King;

Not like that Arthur who, with lance
in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tourna-
ment,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir
Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall
I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and
my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble
chance,
And every chance brought out a noble
knight.
Such times have been not since the
light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of
myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is
dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty
world,
And I, the last, go forth companion-
less,
And the days darken round me, and
the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from
the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt
the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which
I have done
May He within himself make pure!
but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face
again,
Pray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Where-
fore, let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.
For what are men better than sheep
or goats
That nourish a blind life within the
brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands
of prayer
Both for themselves and those who
call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every
way
Bound by gold chains about the feet
of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long
way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a
doubt)—
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it
lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with or-
chard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with
summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound."X

So said he, and the barge with oar
and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes
the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir
Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge
of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for
evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's win-
ter dawn
Amazed him, and he groan'd, "The
King is gone."

And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,
"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly climb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried,
"He passes to be King among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but — if he come no more —
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
They stood before his throne in silence, friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.
Thereat once more he moved about,
and climb
Ev'n to the highest he could climb,
and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on,
and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

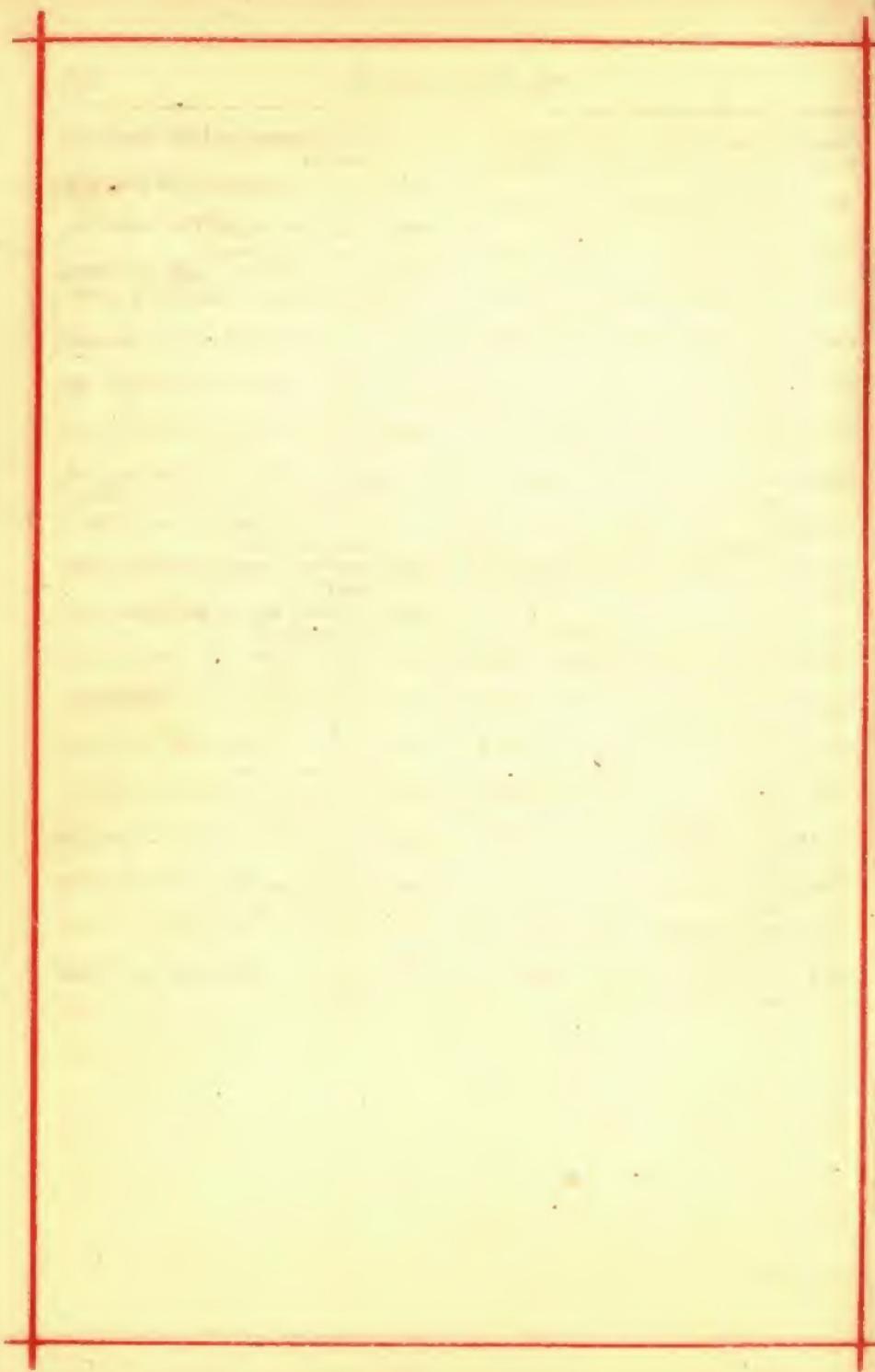
TO THE QUEEN.

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee —
Bear witness, that rememberable day,
When, pale as yet, and fever-worn, the Prince
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life again
From halfway down the shadow of the grave,
Past with thee thro' thy people and their love,
And London roll'd one tide of joy thro' all
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of man
And welcome! witness, too, the silent cry,
The prayer of many a race and creed,
and clime —
Thunderless lightnings striking under sea

From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,
And that true North, whereof we lately heard
A strain to shame us "keep you to yourselves;
So loyal is too costly! friends — your love
Is but a burthen: loose the bond, and go."
Is this the tone of empire? here the faith
That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice
And meaning, whom the roar of Hougomont
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?
What shock has fool'd her since, that she should speak
So feebly? wealthier — wealthier — hour by hour!

The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among
her seas?
There rang her voice, when the full
city peal'd
Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to
their crown
Are loyal to their own far sons, who
love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless
homes
For ever-broadening England, and her
throne
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one
isle,
That knows not her own greatness: if
she knows
And dreads it we are fall'n.— But
thou, my Queen,
Not for itself, but thro' thy living love
For one to whom I made it o'er his
grave
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war
with Soul
Rather than that gray king, whose
name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped,
from mountain peak,
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech
still; or him
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malle-
or's, one
Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a
time
That hover'd between war and wan-
tonness,
And crownings and dethronements:
take withal

Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that
Heaven
Will blow the tempest in the distance
back
From thine and ours: for some are
scared, who mark,
Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
Waverings of every vane with every
wind,
And wordy trucklings to the transient
hour,
And fierce or careless looseners of the
faith,
And Softness breeding scorn of simple
life,
Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,
Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,
Or Art with poisonous honey stol'n
from France,
And that which knows, but careful for
itself,
And that which knows not, ruling that
which knows
To its own harm: the goal of this
great world
Lies beyond sight: yet—if our slowly-
grown
And crown'd Republic's crowning
common-sense,
That saved her many times, not fail—
their fears
Are morning shadows huger than the
shapes
That cast them, not those gloomier
which forego
The darkness of that battle in the
West,
Where all of high and holy dies
away.



THE PRINCESS;

A MEDLEY.

PROLOGUE.

SIR Walter Vivian all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough with their Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son, — the son
A Walter too, — with others of our set.
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park.
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets, Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,

Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer.
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And "this" he said "was Hugh's at Agincourt;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle With all about him" — which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights,
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

"O miracle of women," said the book,
"O noble heart who, being strait besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death.

But now when all was lost or seem'd
as lost—
Her stature more than mortal in the
burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on
fire—
Brake with a blast of trumpets from
the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunder-
bolt,
She trampled some beneath her
horses' heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles
of the wall,
And some were push'd with lances
from the rock,
And part were drown'd within the
whirling brook:
O miracle of noble womanhood!"

So sang the gallant glorious chronicler;
And, I all rapt in this, "Come out," he said,
"To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth
And sister Lilia with the rest." We went
(I kept the book and had my finger
in it)
Down thro' the park: strange was the
sight to me;
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,
sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads:
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd
a font of stone
And drew, from butts of water on the
slope,
The fountain of the moment, playing,
now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of
pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded
ball
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat
lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials
fired

A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes
For azure views; and there a group
of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric
shock
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter:
round the lake
A little clock-work steamer paddling
plied
And shook the lilies: perch'd about
the knolls
A dozen angry models jettied steam:
A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky
groves
And dropt a fairy parachute and past:
And there thro' twenty posts of tele-
graph
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations; so that
sport
Went hand in hand with Science; otherwhere
Pure sport: a herd of boys with
clamor bowl'd
And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd
about
Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men
and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew
thro' light
And shadow, while the twangling
violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and
overhead
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty
time
Made noise with bees and breeze from
end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking
of the time;
And long we gazed, but satiated at
length
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and
ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic lighter than a
feather,

Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house; but all within
The sward was trim as any garden lawn:
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
From neighbor seats: and there was Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
Half child half woman as she was,
had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
And there we join'd them: then the maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great; but we, unworthier, told
Of college: he had climb'd across the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars.
And he had breath'd the Proctor's dogs; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.
But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought
My book to mind: and opening this I read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang

With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness, and "Where,"
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
Beside him) "lives there such a woman now?"
Quick answer'd Lilia "There are thousands now
Such women, but convention beats them down:
It is but bringing up; no more than that:
You men have done it: how I hate you all!
Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
That love to keep us children! O I wish
That I were some great princess, I would build
Far off from men a college like a man's,
And I would teach them all that men are taught;
We are twice as quick!" And here she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.
And one said smiling "Pretty were the sight
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-moths,
or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
If there were many Lilias in the brood,

However deep you might embower the nest,
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:
"That's your light way; but I would
make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself
she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make
her, she:
But Walter hail'd a score of names
upon her,
And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful
Puss,"
And swore he long'd at college,
only long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they
talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They lost their weeks; they vext the
souls of deans;
They rode; they betted; made a hun-
dred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying
terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-
place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus
he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.
"True," she said,
"We doubt not that. O yes, you
miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you
did."

She held it out; and as a parrot
turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for
harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she
shriek'd
And wrung it. "Doubt my word
again!" he said.

"Come, listen! here is proof that you
were miss'd:
We seven stay'd at Christmas up to
read;
And there we took one tutor as to
read:
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube
and square
Were out of season: never man, I
think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as
he:
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty
feet,
And our long walks were stript as bare
as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you
all
L. wassail; often, like as many girls—
Sick for the hollies and the yews of
home—
As many little trifling Lilias—play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas
here,
And what's my thought and when and
where and how,
And often told a tale from mouth to
mouth
As here at Christmas."

She remember'd that:
A pleasant game, she thought: she
liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the
rest.
But these—what kind of tales did
men tell men,
She wonder'd by themselves?
A half-disdain
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her
lips:
And Walter nodded at me; "He
began,
The rest would follow, each in turn;
and so
We forged a sevenfold story. Kind?
what kind?
Chimeras, crotchetts, Christmas sole-
cisms,
Seven-headed monsters only made to
kill
Time by the fire in winter."
"Kill him now,

The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,"

Said Lilia; "Why not now?" the maiden Aunt.

"Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?

A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit the place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn!"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden

Aunt

(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face

With color) turn'd to me with "As you will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine" clamor'd he,

"And make her some great Princess,
six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you

The Prince to win her!"

"Then follow me, the Prince," I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn!
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—

Heroic seems our Princess as required—

But something made to suit with Time and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments

For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all—

This were a medley! we should have him back

Who told the 'Winter's tale' to do it for us.

No matter: we will say whatever comes.

And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space."

So I began,
And the rest follow'd: and the women sang

Between the rougher voices of the men,

Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the songs.

I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand-sire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,

Dying, that none of all our blood should know

The shadow from the substance, and that one

Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,

An old and strange affection of the house.

Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,

And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,

I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,

And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd
"catalepsy."
My mother pitying made a thousand
prayers;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonical by all that look'd on
her,
So gracious was her tact and tender-
ness:
But my good father thought a king a
king;
He cared not for the affection of the
house;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's
wand
To lash offence, and with long arms
and hands
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders
from the mass
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
While life was yet in bud and blade,
betroth'd
To one, a neighboring Princess: she
to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old; and still from
time to time
Came murmurs of her beauty from
the South,
And of her brethren, youths of pu-
issance;
And still I wore her picture by my
heart,
And one dark tress; and all around
them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees
about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that
I should wed,
My father sent ambassadors with
furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these
brought back
A present, a great labor of the loom;
And therewithal an answer vague as
wind:
Besides, they saw the king; he took
the gifts;

He said there was a compact; that
was true:
But then she had a will; was he to
blame?
And maiden fancies; loved to live
alone
Among her women; certain, would
not wed.

That morning in the presence room
I stood
With Cyril and with Florian, my two
friends:
The first, a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts
and bursts
Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we
moved
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and
eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my
father's face
Grow long and troubled like a rising
moon,
Inflamed with wrath: he started on
his feet,
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down,
and rent
The wonder of the loom thro' warp
and woof
From skirt to skirt; and at the last
he sware
That he would send a hundred thou-
sand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind: then
he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and
cook'd his spleen,
Communing with his captains of the
war.

At last I spoke. " My father, let me
go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hos-
pitable:
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once
seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less
than fame,

May rue the bargain made." And
Florian said :
" I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess ; she,
you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from
thence :
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land :
Thro' her this matter might be sifted
clean."
And Cyril whisper'd : " Take me with
you too."
Then laughing " what, if these weird
seizures come
Upon you in those lands, and no one
near
To point you out the shadow from the
truth !
Take me : I'll serve you better in a
strait ;
I grate on rusty hinges here :" but
" No ! "
Roar'd the rough king, " you shall not ;
we ourself
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies
dead
In iron gauntlets : break the council
up."

But when the council broke, I rose
and past
Thro' the wild woods that hung about
the town ;
Found a still place, and pluck'd her
likeness out ;
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it
lying bathed
In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd
trees :
What were those fancies ? wherefore
break her troth ?
Proud look'd the lips : but while I
meditated
A wind arose and rush'd upon the
South,
And shook the songs, the whispers,
and the shrieks
Of the wild woods, together ; and a
Voice
Went with it, " Follow, follow, thou
shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that
month
Became her golden shield, I stole from
court
With Cyril and with Florian, unper-
ceived,
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in
dread
To hear my father's clamor at our
backs
With Ho ! from some bay-window
shake the night ;
But all was quiet : from the bastion'd
walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we
dropt,
And flying reach'd the frontier : then
we crost
To a livelier land ; and so by tilth
and grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of wil-
derness,
We gain'd the mother-city thick with
towers,
And in the imperial palace found the
king.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and
small his voice,
But bland the smile that like a wrin-
kling wind
On glassy water drove his cheek in
lines ;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king : three days he feasted
us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we
came,
And my betroth'd. " You do us,
Prince," he said,
Airing a snowy hand and signet
gem,
" All honor. We remember love our-
selves
In our sweet youth : there did a com-
pact pass
Long summers back, a kind of cere-
mony —
I think the year in which our olives
fail'd.
I would you had her, prince, with all
my heart,

With my full heart: but there were
widows here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady
Blanche;
They fed her theories, in and out of
place
Maintaining that with equal hus-
bandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harp'd on this; with this our
banquets rang;
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots
of talk;
Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
To hear them: knowledge, so my
daughter held,
Was all in all: they had but been, she
thought,
As children; they must lose the child,
assume
The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she
wrote,
Too awful, sure, for what they treated
of,
But all she is and does is awful;
odes
About this losing of the child; and
rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason: these the women
sang;
And they that know such things — I
sought but peace;
No critic I — would call them master-
pieces:
They master'd me. At last she begg'd
a boon,
A certain summer-palace which I
have
Hard by your father's frontier: I said
no,
Yet being an easy man, gave it: and
there,
All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled;
and more
We know not,—only this: they see
no men,
Note v'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look
upon her
As on a kind of paragon; and I

(Pardon me saying it) were much loth
to breed
Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but
since
(And I confess with right) you think
me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to
her;
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate
your chance
Almost as naked nothing."

Thus the king;
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to
slur
With garrulous ease and oily courte-
sies
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all
frets
But chafing me on fire to find my
bride)
Went forth again with both my
friends. We rode
Many a long league back to the North.
At last
From hills, that look'd across a land
of hope,
We dropt with evening on a rustic
town
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-
curve,
Close at the boundary of the liberties;
There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd
mine host
To council, plied him with his richest
wines,
And show'd the late-writ letters of
the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared
As blank as death in marble; then ex-
claim'd
Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go: but as his brain
Began to mellow, "If the king," he
said,
"Had given us letters, was he bound
to speak?
The king would bear him out;" and
at the last —
The summer of the vine in all his
veins —

"No doubt that we might make it
worth his while.
She once had passed that way; he
heard her speak;
She scared him; life! he never saw
the like;
She look'd as grand as doomsday and
as grave:
And he, he reverenced his liege-lady
there;
He always made a point to post with
mares;
His daughter and his housemaid were
the boys:
The land, he understood, for miles
about
Was till'd by women; all the swine
were sows,
And all the dogs"—

But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I
clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented
Maid
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide
of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's
court.
We sent mine host to purchase female
gear;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to
shake
The midriff of despair with laughter,
holp
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden
plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly
bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good
steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we
rode,
And rode till midnight when the col-
lege lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an
arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with
wings

From four wing'd horses dark against
the stars;
And some inscription ran along the
front,
But deep in shadow: further on
we gain'd
A little street half garden and half
house;
But scarce could hear each other
speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver ham-
mers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and
stir
Of fountains spouted up and shower-
ing down
In meshes of the jasmine and the
rose:
And all about us peal'd the nightin-
gale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the
snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a
sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like
Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with con-
tinent,
Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable
wench
Came running at the call, and help'd
us down.
Then stept a buxom hostess forth,
and sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms which
gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and
this,
And who were tutors. "Lady
Blanche," she said,
"And Lady Psyche." "Which was
prettiest,
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche."
"Hers are we,"
One voice, we cried; and I sat down
and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring
East;

"Three ladies of the Northern empire
pray
Your Highness would enroll them with
your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd :
The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And rais'd the blinding bandage from
his eyes :

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;
And then to bed, where half in doze I
seem'd
To float about a glimmering night,
and watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moon-
light, swell
On some dark shore just seen that it
was rich.

II.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress
came :
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold; and now when
these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk
cocoons,
She, courtesying her obeisance, let us
know
The Princess Ida waited : out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch
that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with
lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings
gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great
urns of flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group'd in
threes,
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the
midst ;
And here and there on lattice edges
lay
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tame and paper
sat,
With two tame leopards couch'd be-
side her throne
All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the
Sun,
Than our man's earth ; such eyes were
in her head,
And so much grace and power, breath-
ing down
From over her arch'd brows, with
every turn
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long
hands,
And to her feet. She rose her height,
and said :

"We give you welcome : not with-
out redound
Of use and glory to yourselves ye
come,
The first-fruits of the stranger : after-
time,
And that full voice which circles round
the grave,
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with
me.
What ! are the ladies of your land so
tall ? "
"We of the court" said Cyril. "From
the court"
She answer'd, "then ye know the
Prince ?" and he :
"The climax of his age ! as tho' there
were
One rose in all the world, your High-
ness that,
He worships your ideal :" she replied :
"We scarcely thought in our own hall
to hear

This barren verbiage, current among men,
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and of power;
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,
We dream not of him: when we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourself
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting; then an officer Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:
Not for three years to correspond with home;
Not for three years to cross the liberties;
Not for three years to speak with any men;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We enter'd on the boards: and "Now," she cried,
"Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.
Look, our hall!
Our statues! — not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East;
but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule,
and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,

The Rhodope, that built the pyramid, Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose Convention, since to look on noble forms Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism That which is higher. O lift your natures up:
Embrace our aims: work out your freedom. Girls, Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
And slander, die. Better not be at all Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue The fresh arrivals of the week before; For they press in from all the provinces, And fill the hive."

She spoke, and bowing waved Dismissal: back again we crost the court To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in, There sat along the forms, like morning doves That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch, A patient range of pupils; she herself Erect behind a desk of satin-wood, A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed, And on the hither side, or so she look'd, Of twenty summers. At her left, a child, In shining draperies, headed like a star, Her maiden babe, a double April old, Aglaïa slept. We sat: the Lady glanced: Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame

That whisper'd "Asses' ears," among
the sedge,
"My sister." "Comely, too, by all
that's fair,"
Said Cyril. "O hush, hush!" and she
began.

"This world was once a fluid haze
of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry
tides,
And edded into suns, that wheeling
east
The planets: then the monster, then
the man;
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in
skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing
down his mate;
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and
here
Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious
past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke
of those
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucu-
mo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Ro-
man lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in
each,
How far from just; till warming with
her theme
She fulminated out her scorn of laws
•Saliqne
And little-footed China, touch'd on
Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to
chivalry:
When some respect, however slight,
was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However then commenced the dawn:
a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a
land
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep,
indeed,

Their debt of thanks to her who first
had dared
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and
assert
None lordlier than themselves but
that which made
Woman and man. She had founded;
they must build.
Here might they learn whatever men
were taught:
Let them not fear: some said their
heads were less:
Some men's were small; not they the
least of men;
For often fineness compensated size:
Besides the brain was like the hand,
and grew
With using; thence the man's, if more
was more;
He took advantage of his strength to
be
First in the field: some ages had been
lost;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her
life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious
names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since
in truth
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of
the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
With woman: and in arts of govern-
ment
Elizabeth and others; arts of war
The peasant Joan and others; arts of
grace
Sappho and others vied with any man;
And, last not least, she who had left
her place,
And bow'd her state to them, that they
might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from
the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.
At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future; "everywhere

Two heads in council, two beside the
hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the
world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound
the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the
mind:
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic,
more:
And everywhere the broad and boun-
teous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those
rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the
blood of the world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us:
the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced wel-
come, she
Began to address us, and was moving
on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps,
all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat,
she cried
" My brother!" " Well, my sister."
" O," she said,
" What do you here? and in this
dress? and these?
Why who are these? a wolf within
the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gra-
cious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!"
" No plot, no plot," he answer'd.
" Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on
the gate,
**LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF
DEATH?**"
" And if I had," he answer'd, " who
could think
The softer Adams of your Academe,
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were
such
As chant on the blanching bones of
men?"

" But you will find it otherwise " she
said.
" You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools!
my vow
Binds me to speak, and O that iron
will,
That axelike edge unturnable, our
Head,
The Princess." " Well then, Psyche,
take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning: bury me beside the
gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones;
Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of womankind."
" Let me die too," said Cyril, " having
seen
And heard the Lady Psyche." . . .
I struck in:
" Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the
truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the
Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she
was,
And thus (what other way was left) I
came."
" O Sir, O Prince, I have no country;
none;
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I
was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may
not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how
should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the
thunder-bolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak;
it falls."
" Yet pause," I said: " for that in-
scription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more
there be,
If more and acted on, what follows?
war;
Your own work marr'd: for this your
Academe,

Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo
 Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
 With all fair theories only made to gild
 A stormless summer." "Let the Princess judge
 Of that" she said: "farewell, Sir—and to you.
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoin'd,
 "The fifth in line from that old Florian,
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
 (The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
 As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,
 And all else fled: we point to it, and we say,
 The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
 But branches current yet in kindred veins."
 "Are you that Psyche," Florian added: "she
 With whom I sang about the morning hills,
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,
 And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
 That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
 To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught
 Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
 My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
 That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
 You were that Psyche, but what are you now?"
 "You are that Psyche," Cyril said,
 "for whom I would be that for ever which I seem,

Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
 And glean your scatter'd sapience."
 Then once more,
 "Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,
 "That on her bridal morn before she past
 From all her old companions, when the king
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
 Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
 That were there any of our people there
 In want or peril, there was one to hear
 And help them? look! for such are these and I."
 "Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd,
 "to whom,
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
 Came flying while you sat beside the well?
 The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
 And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.
 O by the bright head of my little niece,
 You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"
 "You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,
 "The mother of the sweetest little maid,
 That ever crow'd for kisses."
 "Out upon it!" She answer'd, "peace! and why should I not play
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
 Him you call great: he for the common weal,
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,
 As I might slay this child, if good need were,
 Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom

"Be it so" the other, "that we still
may lead
The new light up, and culminate in
peace,
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."
Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest
man
Feasted the woman wisest then, in
halls
Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
(Tho' Madam *you* should answer, *we*
would ask)
Less welcome find among us, if you
came
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more." He said
not what,
But "Thanks," she answer'd "Go:
we have been too long
Together: keep your hoods about the
face;
They do so that affect abstraction
here.
Speak little; mix not with the rest;
and hold
Your promise: all, I trust, may yet
be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the
child,
And held her round the knees against
his waist,
And blew the swell'n cheek of a
trumpeter,
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling,
and the child
Push'd her flat hand against his face
and laugh'd;
And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd
For half the day thro' stately theatres
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we
sat, we heard
The grave Professor. On the lecture
slate
The circle rounded under female
hands
With flawless demonstration: follow'd
then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted
out

By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-
words-long
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all
Time
Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame,
the rock,
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,
the flower,
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest.
And whatsoever can be taught and
known;
Till like three horses that have broken
fence,
And glutted all night long breast-
deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge,
and I spoke:
"Why, Sirs, they do all this as well
as we."
"They hunt old trails," said Cyril,
"very well;
But when did woman ever yet in-
vent?"
"Ungracious!" answer'd Florian;
"have you learnt
No more from Psyche's lecture, you
that talk'd
The trash that made me sick, and
almost sad?"
"O trash," he said, "but with a ker-
nel in it.
Should I not call her wise, who made
me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her
in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an empty
hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these
halls,
And round these halls a thousand
baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the
hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant pang;
but O
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger
boy,

The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from
right to save
A prince, a brother? a little will I
yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well
for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I
fear
My conscience will not count me fleck-
less; yet —
Hear my conditions: promise (other-
wise
You perish) as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be
said,
These women were too barbarous,
would not learn;
They fled, who might have shamed
us: promise, all."

What could we else, we promised
each; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-caged,
commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily
arms
Took both his hands, and smiling
faintly said:
"I knew you at the first: tho' you
have grown
You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and
glad
To see you, Florian. I give thee to
death,
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon
it.
Our mother, is she well?"
With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after,
clung
About him, and betwixt them blos-
som'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of
the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious
dews
Began to glisten and to fall: and
while

They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came
a voice,
"I brought a message here from Lady
Blanche."
Back started she, and turning round
we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where
she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's color) with her lips
apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within
her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and
float
In crystal currents of clear morning
seas.

So stood that same fair creature at
the door.
Then Lady Psyche, "Ah — Melissa —
you!
You heard us?" and Melissa, "O
pardon me
I heard, I could not help it, did not
wish:
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me
not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my
breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to
death."
"I trust you," said the other, "for
we two
Were always friends, none closer, elm
and vine:
But yet your mother's jealous tem-
perament —
Let not your prudence, dearest,
drowse, or prove
The Danaid of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
My honor, these their lives." "Ah,
fear me not"
Replied Melissa; "no — I would not
tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those
hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."

The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,
 The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;
 He cleft me thro' the stomacher; and now
 What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
 The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
 I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
 No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
 Flatter myself that always everywhere
 I know the substance, when I see it.
 Well,
 Are castles shadows? Three of them?
 Is she
 The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
 Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?
 For dear are those three castles to my wants,
 And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
 And two dear things are one of double worth,
 And much I might have said, but that my zone
 Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O to hear
 The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
 Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
 To break my chain, to shake my mane: but then,
 Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
 Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;
 Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
 Where they like swallows coming out of time

Will wonder why they came: but bark the bell
 For dinner, let us go!"
 And in we stream'd
 Among the columns, pacing staid and still
 By twos and threes, till all from end to end
 With beauties every shade of brown and fair
 In colors gayer than the morning mist,
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
 How might a man not wander from his wits
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,
 Sat compass'd with professors: they, the while,
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:
 A clamor thicker'd, mixt with inmost terms
 Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone
 Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
 With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
 In act to spring.
 At last a solemn grace
 Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and one
 In this hand held a volume as to read,
 And smoothed a petted peacock down with that:
 Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
 Or under arches of the marble bridge Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some hid and sought
 In the orange thickets: others tost a ball
 Above the fountain-jets, and back again
 With laughter: others lay about the lawns,

Of the older sort, and murmur'd that
their May
Was passing: what was learning unto
them?
They wish'd to marry; they could
rule a house;
Men hated learned women: but we
three
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often
came
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harm'd not: then day droopt;
the chapel bells
Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt
with those
Six hundred maidens clad in purest
white,
Before two streams of light from wall
to wall,
While the great organ almost burst
his pipes,
Groaning for power, and rolling thro'
the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from
Heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.

III.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one,
sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
sleep.

Morn in the white wake of the morn-
ing star
Came furrowing all the orient into
gold.

We rose, and each by other drest with
care
Descended to the court that lay three
parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were
touch'd
Above the darkness from their native
East.

There while we stood beside the fount,
and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bub-
ble, approach'd
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of
sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy
eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears;
"And fly," she cried, "O fly, while
yet you may!"
My mother knows;" and when I
ask'd her "how,"
"My fault," she wept, "my fault! and
yet not mine;
Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon
me.
My mother, 'tis her wont from night
to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have
been the Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two
arms;
And so it was agreed when first they
came;
But Lady Psyche was the right hand
now,
And she the left, or not, or seldom
used;
Hers more than half the students, all
the love.
And so last night she fell to canvass
you:
Her countrywomen! she did not envy
her.
'Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
Girls? — more like men!' and at these
words the snake,
My secret, seem'd to stir within my
breast;
And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my
cheek

Began to burn and burn, and her lynx
eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she
laugh'd :
'O marvellously modest maiden, you !
Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they
had been men
You need not set your thoughts in
rubric thus
For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I
am shamed
That I must needs repeat for my
excuse
What looks so little graceful : 'men'
(for still
My mother went revolving on the
word)
'And so they are,—very like men
indeed—
And with that woman closeted for
hours !'
Then came these dreadful words out
one by one,
'Why — these — are — men : ' I shud-
der'd : ' and you know it.'
'O ask me nothing,' I said : ' And
she knows too,
And she conceals it.' So my mother
clutch'd
The truth at once, but with no word
from me ;
And now thus early risen she goes to
inform
The Princess : Lady Psyche will be
crush'd ;
But you may yet be saved, and there-
fore fly :
But heal me with your pardon ere you
go.'

" What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a
blush ? "

Said Cyril : " Pale one, blush again :
than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives
away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more
in Heaven "

He added, " lest some classic Angel
speak
In scorn of us, 'They mounted, Gany-
medes,

To tumble, Vulcans, on the second
morn.'
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough : " and he
went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls,
and thought
He scarce would prosper. " Tell us,"
Florian ask'd,
" How grew this feud betwixt the
right and left."
" O long ago," she said, " betwixt these
two
Division smoulders hidden ; 'tis my
mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice : much I bear with
her :
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her) she was wedded to a
fool ;
And still she rail'd against the state
of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she
brought her up.
But when your sister came she won
the heart
Of Ida : they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inoscu-
lated ;
Consonant chords that shiver to one
note ;
One mind in all things : yet my mother
still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her the-
ories,
And angled with them for her pupil's
love :
She calls her plagiarist ; I know not
what :
But I must go : I dare not tarry," and
light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after
her,
" An open-hearted maiden, true and
pure.
If I could love, why this were she :
how pretty

Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,
But in her own grand-way: being herself
Three times more noble than three score of men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but — ah she — whene'er she moves
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task," he cried;
"No fighting shadows here! I forced a way
Thro' solid opposition crabbd' and gnarl'd.

Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there
At point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who we were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.
I urged the fierce inscription 'on the gate,
And our three lives. True — we had limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she said,
'So puddled as it is with favoritism.' I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:
Her answer was 'Leave me to deal with that.'
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave

May beat admission in a thousand years,
I recommenced; 'Decide not ere you pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third — the authentic foundress you.
I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:
Wink at our advent: help my prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you
Some palace in our land, where you shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time
For ever.' Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
"That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should find the land
Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
Out yonder;" then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platanus of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went.
She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one

Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe;
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following
up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said:
"O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
Too harsh to your companion yester-morn;
Unwillingly we spake." "No — not to her,"
I answer'd, "but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say."
"Again?" she cried, "are you ambassadresses
From him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license: speak, and let the topic die."

I stammer'd that I knew him — could have wish'd —
"Our king expects — was there no precontract?

There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem
 All he prefigured, and he could not see
 The bird of passage flying south but long'd
 To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
 Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to death,
 Or baser courses, children of despair."

"Poor boy," she said, "can he not read—no books?
 Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals in that
 Which men delight in, martial exercise?
 To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
 Methinks he seems no better than a girl;
 As girls were once, as we ourself have been:
 We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them:
 We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
 Being other—since we learnt our meaning here,
 To lift the woman's fall'n divinity
 Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile
 "And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,
 At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,
 O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
 She kept her state, and left the drunken king
 To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

"Alas your Highness breathes full East," I said,
 "On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,
 I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
 To assail this gray preëminence of man!"

You grant me license; might I use it? think;
 Ere half be done perchance your life may fail;
 Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
 And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
 May only make that footprint upon sand
 Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
 Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
 With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
 Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,
 Love, children, happiness?"
 And she exclaim'd,
 "Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!
 What! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,
 Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?
 You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to thus:
 Yet will we say for children, would they grew
 Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:
 But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
 Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die;
 They with the sun and moon renew their light
 For ever, blessing those that look on them.
 Children—that men may pluck them from our hearts,
 Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—
 O—children—there is nothing upon earth
 More miserable than she that has a son
 And sees him err: nor would we work for fame;

Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
Who learns the one *rou sto* whence
after-hands
May move the world, tho' she herself effect
But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed,
we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living, each, a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out,
and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;
We are used to that: for women, up till this
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea
isle taboo,
Dwarfs of the gynæcum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot
guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof —
Oh if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches, than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

She bow'd as if to vail a noble tear;

And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be." "Dare we dream of that," I ask'd,
"Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,
That practice betters?" "How," she cried, "you love
The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her: For there are schools for all." "And yet" I said
"Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic." "Nay, we thought of that,"
She answer'd, "but it pleased us not: in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,

Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
 For many weary moons before we came,
 This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
 Would tend upon you. To your question now,
 Which touches on the workman and his work.
 Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so:
 For was, and is, and will be, are but is;
 And all creation is one act at once,
 The birth of light: but we that are not all,
 As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
 And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make
 One act a phantom of succession: thus
 Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time;
 But in the shadow will we work, and mould
 The woman to the fuller day."

She spake
 With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,
 Full of all beauty. "O how sweet"
 I said
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask)
 "To linger here with one that loved us." "Yea,"
 She answer'd, "or with fair philosophies
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
 Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
 The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers
 Built to the Sun;" then, turning to her maids,

"Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
 Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here she stood,
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
 The woman conqueror; woman-conquer'd there
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
 And all the men mourn'd at his side: but we
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing,
 Cyril kept
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
 With mine affianced. Many a little hand
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
 In the dark crag: and then we turn'd,
 we wound
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
 Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
 Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
 The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

IV.

The splendor falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story:
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild catnact leaps in glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
 dying.

O bark, O bear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
 dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky.
 They faint on hill or field or river:
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,

And grow for ever and for ever,
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,

dying.

"There sinks the nebulous star we
call the Sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound." Said Ida; "let us down and rest;" and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled
precipices,
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and
cleft,
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to
where below
No bigger than a glow-worm shone
the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she
lean'd on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent
her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport rose and
fell.

But when we planted level feet,
and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down
we sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us
glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine,
and gold.

Then she, "Let some one sing to
us: lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music:"
and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp,
and sang.

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they
mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-
world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one

That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

She ended with such passion that
the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring
pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some
disdain
Answer'd the Princess, "If indeed
there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to
men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears
with wool
And so pace by: but thine are fancies
hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old bygones
be,
While down the streams that float us
each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering
bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on
the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve
their time
Toward that great year of equal
mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in
the end
Found golden: let the past be past;
let be
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough
kex break
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-
blown goat
Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig
tree split

Their monstrous idols, care not while
we hear
A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle,
burns
Above the unrisen morrow :" then to
me ;
" Know you no song of your own land,"
she said,
" Not such as moans about the retro-
spect,
But deals with the other distance and
the hues
Of promise ; not a death's-head at the
wine."

Then I remember'd one myself had
made,
What time I watch'd the swallow
winging south
From mine own land, part made long
since, and part
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as
far
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

" O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

" O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest
each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

" O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow,
and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

" O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

" Why lingereth she to clothe her heart
with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are
green ?

" O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is
frown'd ;
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

" O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

" O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make
her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at
each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old
time,
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd
with alien lips,
And knew not what they meant ; for
still my voice
Rang false : but smiling . " Not for
thee," she said,
" O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers,
rather, maid,
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-
crake
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass :
and this
A mere love-poem ! O for such, my
friend,
We hold them slight : they mind us of
the time
When we made bricks in Egypt.
Knaves are men,
That lute and flute fantastic tender-
ness,
And dress the victim to the offering up.
And paint the gates of Hell with Par-
adise,
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honor once ;
She wept her true eyes blind for such
a one,
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
I loved her. Peace be with her. She
is dead.
So they blaspheme the muse ! But
great is song
Used to great ends : ourself have often
tried
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm
have dash'd
The passion of the prophetess ; for song
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
Of spirit than to junketing and love.
Love is it ? Would this same mock-
love, and this
Mock-Hymens were laid up like winter
bats,

Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills,
and sphered
Whole in ourselves and owed to none.
Enough!
But now to leaven play with profit,
you,
Know you no song, the true growth of
your soil,
That gives the manners of your coun-
try-women?

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
Then while I dragg'd my brains for
such a song,
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd
glass had wrought,
Or master'd by the sense of sport, be-
gan
To troll a careless, careless tavern-
catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experi-
ences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded
at him,
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd
and shook;
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;
"Forbear," the Princess cried; "For-
bear, Sir," I;
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath
and love,
I smote him on the breast; he started
up;
There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
Melissa clamor'd "Flee the death;"
"To horse,"
Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and
fled, as flies
A troop of snowy doves athwart the
dusk,
When some one batters at the dove-
cote-doors,
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at
heart,
In the pavilion: there like parting
hopes

I heard them passing from me: hoof
by hoof,
And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clang'd on the bridge; and then an-
other shriek,
"The Head, the Head, the Princess, O
the Head!"
For blind with rage she miss'd the
plank, and roll'd
In the river. Out I sprang from glow
to gloom:
There whirl'd her white robe like a
blossom'd branch
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I
gave,
No more; but woman-vested as I was
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I
caught her; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my
left
The weight of all the hopes of half
the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place and
stoop'd
To drench his dark locks in the gur-
gling wave.
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove
and caught,
And grasping down the boughs I
gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmer-
ingly group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching
forward drew
My burthen from mine arms; they
cried "she lives!"
They bore her back into the tent: but
I,
So much a kind of shame within me
wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening
eyes,
Nor found my friends; but push'd
alone on foot
(For since her horse was lost I left
her mine)
Across the woods, and less from
Indian craft
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found
at length

The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
Of open-work in which the hunter rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches there-upon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
And, lost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this were she,"
But it was Florian. "Hist O Hist," he said,
"They seek us: out so late is out of rules.
Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the cry.
How came you here?" I told him: "I" said he,
"Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.
Arriving all confused among the rest
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
Girl after girl was call'd to trial; each

Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all,
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not;
And then, demanded if her mother knew,
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;
And I slipt out: but whither will you now?
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled:
What, if together? that were not so well.
Would rather we had never come! I dread
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I
That struck him: this is proper to the clown,
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
That which he says he loves: for Cyril, howe'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song
Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips
Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament:
But as the waterlily starts and slides Upon the level in little puffs of wind,

Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near
 Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,
 "Names;"
 He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I began
 To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
 And double in and out the boles, and race
 By all the fountains: fleet I was of foot:
 Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; behind
 I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear
 Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
 And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
 At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
 That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
 And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat
 High in the hall: above her droop'd a lamp,
 And made the single jewel on her brow
 Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
 Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side
 Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair
 Damp from the river; and close behind her stood
 Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
 Huge women blowzed with health, and wind, and rain,
 And labor. Each was like a Druid rock;
 Or like a spire of land that stands apart
 Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
 An advent to the throne; and there beside,
 Half-naked as if caught at once from bed
 And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
 The lily-shining child; and on the left,
 Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,
 Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,
 Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect
 Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

"It was not thus, O Princess, in old days:
 You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips:
 I led you then to all the Castalies;
 I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
 I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
 Your second mother: those were gracious times.
 Then came your new friend: you began to change—
 I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool;
 Till taken with her seeming openness
 You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,
 To me you froze: this was my meed for all.
 Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
 And partly that I hoped to win you back,
 And partly conscious of my own deserts,
 And partly that you were my civil head,
 And chiefly you were born for something great,
 In which I might your fellow-worker be,

When time should serve; and thus a noble scheme
 Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
 We took this palace; but even from the first
 You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
 What student came but that you planed her path
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
 A foreigner, and I your country-woman,
 I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
 But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean;
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
 Then came these wolves; *they* knew her: *they* endured,
 Long-closeted with her the yester-morn,
 To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
 And me none told: not less to an eye like mine
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,
 Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
 Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
 To meet a cold 'We thank you, we shall hear of it
 From Lady Psyche:' you had gone to her,
 She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
 In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
 Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
 Were all miscounted as malignant haste
 To push my rival out of place and power.

But public use required she should be known;
 And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
 I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
 And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
 I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,
 That surely she will speak; if not, then I:
 Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
 According to the coarseness of their kind,
 For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)*
 And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
 I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies;
 And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
 I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
 And talent, I— you know it—I will not boast:
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men will say
 We did not know the real light, but chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly, "Good:
 Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)

Our mind is changed: we take it to
ourselves."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
"The plan was mine. I built the nest" she said
"To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and stoop'd to updrag
Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung.

A Niobean daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven;
and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A woman-post in flying raiment.
Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood

Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick
Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens:
For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard

In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire;
she crush'd
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
"Read," and I read—two letters—one her sire's.

"Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
We knew not your ungracious laws,
which learnt,
We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong,
but fell
Into his father's hands, who has this night,
You lying close upon his territory,
Slip round and in the dark invested you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's running thus:
"You have our son: touch not a hair of his head:
Render him up unscathed: give him your hand:
Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear
You hold the woman is the better man;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their Lords
Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve
That we this night should pluck your palace down;
And we will do it, unless you send us back
Our son, on the instant, whole."

So far I read;
And then stood up and spoke impetu-
ously.

"O not to pry and peer on your
reserve,
But led by golden wishes, and a hope
The child of regal compact, did I
break
Your precinct; not a scorner of your
sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be: hear me, for I
bear,
Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er
your wrongs,
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock
a life
Less mine than yours: my nurse
would tell me of you;
I babble for you, as babies for the
moon.
Vague brightness; when a boy, you
stoop'd to me
From all high places, lived in all fair
lights,
Came in long breezes rapt from in-
most south
And blown to inmost north; at eve
and dawn
With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
The leader wildswan in among the
stars
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths
of glowworm light
The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida.
Now,
Because I would have reach'd you,
had you been
Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the
enthroned
Persephonè in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of abeyance all wornout,
A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
Not in this frequence can I lend full
tongue,
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that
wait
On you, their centre: let me say but
this,
That many a famous man and woman,
town

And landskip, have I heard of, after
seen
The dwarfs of presage: tho' when
known, there grew
Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing; but in
you I found
My boyish dream involved and daz-
zled down
And master'd, while that after-beauty
makes
Such head from act to act, from hour
to hour,
Within me, that except you slay me
here,
According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say
The seal does music; who desire you
more
Than growing boys their manhood;
dying lips,
With many thousand matters left to
do,
The breath of life; O more than poor
men wealth,
Than sick men health — yours, yours,
not mine — but half
Without you; with you, whole; and
of those halves
You worthiest; and how'e'er you block
and bar
Your heart with system out from mine,
I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse
despair,
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonis-
mus
To follow up the worthiest till he die:
Yet that I came not all unauthorized
Behold your father's letter."

On one knee
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,
and dash'd
Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
Invective seem'd to wait behind her
lips,
As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world
with foam:
And so she would have spoken, but
there rose

A hubbub in the court of half the maids
 Gather'd together: from the illumined hall
 Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
 And gold and golden heads; they to and fro
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
 Some crying there was an army in the land,
 And some that men were in the very walls,
 And some they cared not; till a clamor grew
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
 And worse-confounded: high above them stood
 The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but rising up
 Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
 To the open window moved, remaining there
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
 Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
 Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and call'd
 Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

"What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?
 On me, me, me, the storm first breaks:
 I dare
 All these male-thunderbolts: what is it ye fear?"

Peace! there are those to avenge us and they come:
 If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause, Die: yet I blame you not so much for fear;
 Six thousand years of fear have made you that
 From which I would redeem you: but for those
 That stir this hubbub — you and you — I know
 Your faces there in the crowd — tomorrow morn
 We hold a great convention: then shall they
 That love their voices more than duty, learn
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live
 No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
 The drunkard's football, laughing stocks of Time,
 Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat the crowd
 Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile, that look'd
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

" You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:
And you look well too in your woman's dress:
Well have you done and like a gentleman.
You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood —
Then men had said — but now — What hinders me
To take such bloody vengeance on you both? —
Yet since our father — Wasps in our good hive,
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears —
O would I had his sceptre for one hour!
You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us —
I wed with thee! I bound by precontract
Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold
That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:
I trample on your offers and on you:
Begone: we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd
Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause,
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
The weight of destiny: so from her face

They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;
The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy, Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
Set into sunrise; then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands:
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-possess'd,
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;

And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—
 Like one that wishes at a dance to change
 The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,
 Or some grand fight to kill and make an end:
 And he that next inherited the tale
 Half turning to the broken statue, said,
 "Sir Ralph has got your colors: if I prove
 Your knight, and fight your battle,
 what for me?"
 It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb
 Lay by her like a model of her hand.
 She took it and she flung it. "Fight," she said,
 "And make us all we would be, great and good."
 He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
 Arranged the favor, and assumed the Prince.

v.

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,
 We stumbled on a stationary voice,
 And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace" I.
 "The second two: they wait," he said,
 "pass on;
 His Highness wakes:" and one, that clash'd in arms,
 By glimmering lanes and walls of canvass led
 Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
 Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light
 Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to hear,

As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
 A lisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,
 Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and then
 A strangled titter, out of which there brake
 On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
 Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings
 Began to wag their baldness up and down,
 The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,
 The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,
 And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,
 Panted from weary sides "King, you are free!
 We did but keep you surely for our son,
 If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,
 That tends her bristled grunters in the sludge:"
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,
 More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
 And all one rag, disprinced from head to heel.
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him, "Look,
 He has been among his shadows."
 "Satan take
 The old women and their shadows!
 (thus the King Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.
 Go: Cyril told us all." As boys that slink
 From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice

From what was left of faded woman-slough
 To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
 Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
 And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us.
 A little shy at first, but by and by
 We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
 Had came on Psyche weeping: "then we fell
 Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
 But will not speak, nor stir."

He show'd a tent

A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there
 Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
 Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
 And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,
 All her fair length upon the ground she lay:
 And at her head a follower of the camp,
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come" he whisper'd to her,
 "Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.
 What have you done but right? you could not slay
 Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:

Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
 When fallen in darker ways." And likewise I:
 "Be comforted: have I not lost her too,
 In whose least act abides the nameless charm
 That none has else for me?" She heard, she moved,
 She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,
 And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth
 As those that mourn half-shrouded over death
 In deathless marble. "Her," she said, "my friend—
 Parted from her—betray'd her cause and mine—
 Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?
 O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!"
 To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray
 Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child!"
 At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!
 For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
 And either she will die from want of care,
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
 The child is hers—for every little fault,
 The child is hers; and they will beat my girl
 Remembering her mother: O my flower!
 Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
 And she will pass me by in after-life
 With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.
 Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
 To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,

The horror of the shame among them
all :
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and
day,

Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one
child :

And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her :
Ah ! what might that man not deserve
of me

Who gave me back my child ? " " Be
comforted,"

Said Cyril, " you shall have it :" but
again
She veil'd her brows, and prone she
sank, and so
Like tender things that being caught
feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp and inward raced
the scouts

With rumor of Prince Arac hard at
hand.

We left her by the woman, and with-
out

Found the gray kings at parle : and
" Look you " cried

My father " that our compact be ful-
fill'd :

You have spoilt this child ; she laughs
at you and man :

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me,
and him :

But red-faced war has rods of steel
and fire ;

She yields, or war."

Then Gama turn'd to me :
" We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy
time

With our strange girl : and yet they
say that still

You love her. Give us, then, your
mind at large :

How say you, war or not ? "

" Not war, if possible,
O king," I said, " lest from the abuse
of war,

The desecrated shrine, the trampled
year,

The smouldering homestead, and the
household flower
Torn from the lintel — all the com-
mon wrong —

A smoke go up thro' which I loom to
her

Three times a monster : now she
lightens scorn

At him that mars her plan, but then
would hate

(And every voice she talk'd with
ratify it,

And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this
knot,

By gentleness than war. I want her
love.

What were I nigher this altho' we
dash'd

Your cities into shards with catapults,
She would not love ; — or brought her
chain'd, a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
Not ever would she love ; but brood-
ing turn

The book of scorn, till all my flitting
chance

Were caught within the record of her
wrongs,

And crusht to death : and rather,
Sire, than this

I would the old God of war himself
were dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs
of wreck,

Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd
in ice,

Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake
My father, " Tut, you know them not,
the girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost
think

That idiot legend credible. Look you,
Sir !

Man is the hunter ; woman is his
game :

The sleek and shining creatures of the
chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
 They love us for it, and we ride them down.
 Wheedling and siding with them!
 Out! for shame!
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in
 Among the women, snares them by the score
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with death
 He reddens what he kisses: thus I won Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
 Worth winning; but this firebrand—gentleness
 To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
 Were wisdom to it."

"Yes but Sire," I cried,
 "Wild natures need wise curbs. 'The soldier? No:
 What dares not Ida do that she should prize
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes,
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,
 No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, king,
 True woman: but you clash them all in one,
 That have as many differences as we.
 The violet varies from the lily as far
 As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
 And some unworthily; their sinless faith,

A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need
 More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?
 They worth it? truer to the law within?
 Severer in the logic of a life?
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences Of earth and heaven? and she of whom you speak,
 My mother, looks as whole as some serene
 Creation minted in the golden moods Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
 But pure as lines of green that streak the white
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man, Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
 But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
 Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
 As dues of Nature. To our point not war:
 Lest I lose all."

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense," Said Gama. "We remember love herself
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
 You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk; And there is something in it as you say:
 But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—
 He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
 I would he had our daughter: for the rest,
 Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,

Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—
 We would do much to gratify your Prince—
 We pardon it; and for your ingress here
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
 You did but come as goblins in the night,
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
 And speak with Arae: Arae's word is thrice.
 As ours with Ida: something may be done—
 I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
 Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan
 Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd
 White hands of farewell to my sire,
 who growl'd
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring
 In every bole, a song on every spray
 Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
 In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
 All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode

And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
 Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
 On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than Peace
 Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,
 And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
 With clamor: for among them rose a cry
 As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
 The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum
 Beat; merrily-blown shrill'd the martial fife;
 And in the blast and bray of the long horn
 And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
 The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced
 Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
 Such thews of men: the midmost and the highest
 Was Arae: all about his motion clung
 The shadow of his sister, as the beam
 Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
 Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,
 That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
 And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
 And bickers into red and emerald, shone
 Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first
 I heard
 War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of force,
 Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
 Stir in me as to strike: then took the king
 His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand

And now a pointed finger told them all :
 A common light of smiles at our disguise
 Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
 Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,
 The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
 Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

"Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he himself
 Your captive, yet my father wills not war :
 And, 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war or no ?
 But then this question of your troth remains :
 And there's a downright honest meaning in her ;
 She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet
 She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme ;
 She prest and prest it on me — I myself,
 What know I of these things ? but, life and soul !
 I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs ;
 I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what of that ?
 I take her for the flower of woman-kind,
 And so I often told her, right or wrong,
 And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
 And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all,
 I stand upon her side : she made me swear it —
 'Sdeath — and with solemn rites by candlelight —
 Swear by St. something — I forgot her name —
 Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men ;
 She was a princess too ; and so I swore.
 Come, this is all ; she will not : waive your claim :

If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
 Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's will."
 I lagg'd in answer loth to render up
 My precontract, and loth by brainless war
 To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet ;
 Till one of those two brothers, half aside
 And fingering at the hair about his lip,
 To prick us on to combat "Like to like !
 The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."
 A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow !
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counterscowl,
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point
 Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
 "Decide it here : why not ? we are three to three."

Then spake the third "But three to three ? no more ?
 No more, and in our noble sister's cause ?
 More, more, for honor : every captain waits
 Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
 More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
 May breathe himself, and quick ! by overthrow
 Of these or those, the question settled die."

"Yea," answer'd I, "for this wild wreath of air,
 This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
 Foam of men's deeds — this honor, if ye will.
 It needs must be for honor if at all : Since, what decision ? if we fail, we fail,

And if we win, we fail: she would not
keep
Her compact." " 'Sdeath! but we
will send to her,'
Said Arac, " worthy reasons why she
should
Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',
And you shall have her answer by
the word."

" Boys!" shriek'd the old king, but
vainlier than a hen.
To her false daughters in the pool;
for none
Regarded; neither seem'd there more
to say:
Back rode we to my father's camp,
and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the
gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our
claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life: three
times he went:
The first, he blew and blew, but none
appear'd:
He batter'd at the doors; none came:
the next,
An awful voice within had warn'd
him thence:
The third, and those eight daughters
of the plough
Came sallying thro' the gates, and
caught his hair,
And so belabor'd him on rib and
cheek
They made him wild: not less one
glance he caught
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd
there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,
firm
Tho' compass'd by two armies and
the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately
Pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and
right and left
Suck'd from the dark heart of the
long hills roll

The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and
yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.
But when I told the king that I
was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he
clash'd
His iron palms together with a cry;
Himself would tilt it out among the
lads:
But overborne by all his bearded
lords
With reasons drawn from age and
state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce
demur:
And many a bold knight started up in
heat,
And sware to combat for my claim
till death.

All on this side the palace ran the
field
Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise
here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-
belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble
stairs,
And great bronze valves, emboss'd
with Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd: so here upon
the flat
All that long morn the lists were
hammer'd up,
And all that morn the heralds to and
fro,
With message and defiance, went and
came;
Last, Ida's answer, in royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rol-
ling words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

" O brother, you have known the
pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation when we
heard
Of those that iron-cramp'd their
women's feet;

Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge;
Of living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead despots; and of those,—
Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion: and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men: the old leaven leaven'd all:
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
No woman named: therefore I set my face
Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them:
I stored it full of rich memorial:
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey
And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond — the striplings! — for their sport!
I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these?
Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd
In honor — what, I would not aught of false —
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know

Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
What end soever: fail you will not. Still
Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;
His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,
Fight and fight well; strike and strike home. O dear
Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the aftertime,
Your very armor hallow'd, and your statues
Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd aside,
We plant a solid foot into the Time,
And mould a generation strong to move
With claim on claim from right to right, till she
Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself;
And Knowledge in our own land make her free,
And, ever following those two crowned twins,
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain
Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs
Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest.
" See that there be no traitors in your camp:
We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust
Since our arms fail'd — this Egyptian plague of men!
Almost our maids were better at their homes,
Than thus man-girled here: indeed I think

Our chiefest comfort is the little child
Of one unworthy mother; which she
left:
She shall not have it back: the child
shall grow
To prize the authentic mother of her
mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed
This morning: there the tender orphan
hands
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm
from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world
farewell."

I ceased; he said, "Stubborn, but
she may sit
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-
storms,
And breed up warriors! See now, tho'
yourself
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to
sloughs
That swallow common sense, the
spindling king,
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
When the man wants weight, the
woman takes it up,
And topples down the scales; but this
is fixt
As are the roots of earth and base of
all;
Man for the field and woman for the
hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle
she:
Man with the head and woman with
heart:
Man to command and woman to
obey;
All else confusion. Look you! the
gray mare
Is ill to live with, when her whinny
shrills
From tile to scullery, and her small
goodman
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the
fires of Hell
Mix with his hearth: but you — she's
yet a colt—
Take, break her: strongly groom'd and
straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those detest-
able
That let the bantling scald at home,
and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs
in the street.
They say she's comely; there's the
fairer chance:
I like her none the less for rating at
her!
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty
brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly.
Boy,
The bearing and training of a child
Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king :
I took my leave, for it was nearly
noon:
I pore upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause "take not his
life:"
I mused on that wild morning in the
woods,
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt
win:"
I thought on all the wrathful king had
said,
And how the strange betrothment
was to end:
Then I remember'd that burnt sor-
cerer's curse
That one should fight with shadows
and should fall;
And like a flash the weird affection
came:
King, camp and college turn'd to hol-
low shows;
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten
ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a
dream:
And ere I woke it was the point of
noon,
The lists were ready. Empanoplied
and plumed
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet
blared

At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
 Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
 The trumpet, and again: at which the storm
 Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
 And riders front to front, until they closed
 In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
 And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,
 I dream'd
 Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
 And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
 And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
 Part sat like rocks; part reel'd but kept their seats:
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew:
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down
 From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
 The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
 And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft, and shield—
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
 With hammers; till I thought, can this be he
 From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,
 The mother makes us most—and in my dream
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
 And highest, among the statues, statue-like,
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,

With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
 A single band of gold about her hair,
 Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she
 No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—
 Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,
 Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drove
 Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
 And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my dream
 All that I would. But that large-moulded man,
 His visage all agrin as at a wake,
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back
 With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
 And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,
 And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for everything
 Gave way before him: only Florian, he
 That loved me closer than his own right eye,
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
 With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
 And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my veins
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,



*"Like summer tempest came her tears —
"Sweet my child, I live for thee!"*

THE PRINCESS.



Till I struck out and shouted ; the
blade glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream
and truth
Flow'd from me ; darkness closed me ;
and I fell.

VI.

Home they brought her warrior dead :
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :
All her maidens, watching, said,
" She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe ;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stopt
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
" Sweet my child, I live for thee."

My dream had never died or lived
again.

As in some mystic middle state I lay ;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard :
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me
all

So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to
me,
That all things grew more tragic and
more strange ;
That when our side was vanquish'd
and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great
cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard
and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my
casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after
him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm : there on
the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she
sang.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : the
seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they
came ;
The leaves were wet with women's tears :
they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand :
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fall'n
themselves.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they
came,
The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and
floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they
struck ;
With their own blows they hurt themselves,
nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder
blade.

" Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall
grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power : and
roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the
fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

" And now, O maids, behold our
sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken : fear we
not
To break them more in their behoof,
whose arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with
a day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual
feast,
When dames and heroines of the
golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of
Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three :
but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights
are won.

Let them not lie in the tents with
coarse mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer
these
The brethren of our blood and cause,
that there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender
ministries
Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet
in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze
valves, and led
A hundred maids in train across the
Park.
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed,
on they came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest:
by them went
The enamor'd air sighing, and on
their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering
fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of
light
Slid, they moving under shade: but
Blanche
At distance follow'd: so they came:
anon
Thro' open field into the lists they
wound
Timorously; and as the leader of the
herd
That holds a stately fretwork to the
Sun,
And follow'd up by a hundred airy
does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on
air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated
on
To where her wounded brethren lay;
there stay'd;
Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,
—and prest
Their hands, and call'd them dear
deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal
names,
And said "You shall not lie in the
tents but here,

And nursed by those for whom you
fought, and served
With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whether moved by this, or
was it chance,
She past my way. Up started from
my side
The old lion, glaring with his whelp-
less eye,
Silent; but when she saw me lying
stark,
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly
pale,
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd; and when
she saw
The haggard father's face and rever-
end beard
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the
blood
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of
pain
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her
forehead past
A shadow, and her hue changed, and
she said:
"He saved my life: my brother slew
him for it."
No more: at which the king in bitter
scorn
Drew from my neck the painting and
the tress,
And held them up: she saw them,
and a day
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good Queen, her mother,
shore the tress
With kisses, ere the days of Lady
Blanche:
And then once more she look'd at my
pale face:
Till understanding all the foolish
work
Of fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her
mind;
Her noble heart was molten in her
breast;
She bow'd, she set the child on the
earth; she laid
A feeling finger on my brows, and
presently

"O Sire," she said, "he lives: he is
not dead:
O let me have him with my brethren
here
In our own palace: we will tend on
him
Like one of these: if so, by any
means,
To lighten this great clog of thanks,
that make
Our progress falter to the woman's
goal."

She said: but at the happy word
"he lives"
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my
wounds.
So those two foes above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and
evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche
ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by
us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden
brede,
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the
grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother and
began
A blind and babbling laughter, and
to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the
appeal
Brook'd not, but clamoring out "Mine
— mine — not yours,
It is not yours, but mine: give me the
child"
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was
the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-
mouth'd.
And turn'd each face her way: wan
was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming
mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her
eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls,
and half

The sacred mother's bosom, panting,
burst
The laces toward her babe; but she
nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida
heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,
stood
Erect and silent, striking with her
glance
The mother, me, the child; but he
that lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
Trail'd himself up on one knee: then
he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down
she look'd
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying
as it seem'd,
Or self-involved; but when she learnt
his face,
Remembering his ill-omen'd song,
arose
Once more thro' all her height, and
o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and
he said:

"O fair and strong and terrible!
Lioness
That with your long locks play the
Lion's mane!
But Love and Nature, these are two
more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on
our necks,
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of
your will.
What would you more? give her the
child! remain
Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you
be:
Win you the hearts of women; and
beware
Lest, where you seek the common
love of these,
The common hate with the revolving
wheel
Should drag you down, and some
great Nemesis

Break from a darken'd future, crown'd
with fire,
And tread you out for ever: but how-
so'er
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own
arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to
her,
Give her the child! O if, I say, you
keep
One pulse that beats true woman, if
you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dan-
dled you,
Or own one port of sense not flint to
prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn
to lay it,
Yourself, in hands so lately claspt
with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her
one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could
not kill,
Give me it: I will give it her."

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation
roll'd
Dry flame, she listening; after sank
and sank
And, into mournful twilight mellow-
ing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it:
"Pretty bud!"
Lily of the vale! half open'd bell of
the woods!
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when
a world
Of traitorous friend and broken sys-
tem made
No purple in the distance, mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine,
farewell;
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part: and yet how fain
was I
To dream thy cause embraced in
mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I
felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren
breast

In the dead prime: but may thy
mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to
me!
And, if thou needs must bear the
yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom"—here she kiss'd
it: then—
"All good go with thee! take it, Sir,"
and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed
hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as
she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in
thanks;
Then felt it sound and whole from
head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close
enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and mum-
bled it,
And hid her bosom with it; after that
Put on more calm and added suppli-
antly:

"We two were friends: I go to
mine own land
For ever: find some other: as for me
I scarce am fit for your great plans:
yet speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part
forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the
child.
Then Arac. "Ida—'sdeath! you
blame the man;
You wrong yourselves—the woman
is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to
me!
I am your warrior: I and mine have
fought
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand,
she weeps:
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice
o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the
ground,

And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said :

"I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?
Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
She said you had a heart—I heard her say it—
'Our Ida has a heart'—just ere she died—
'But see that some one with authority Be near her still' and I—I sought for one—

All people said she had authority—
The Lady Blanche: much profit!
Not one word;
No! tho' your father sues: see how you stand
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maim'd,
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
For your wild whim: and was it then for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,
When first she came, all flush'd you said to me
Now had you got a friend of your own age,
Now could you share your thought; now should men see
Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd with, she

You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and now
A word, but one, one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?
You will not? well—no heart have you, or such
As fancies like the vermin in a nut Have fretted all to dust and bitterness."
So said the small king moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force
By many a varying influence and so long.
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept:
Her head a little bent; and on her mouth
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
In a still water: then brake out my sire,
Lifting his grim head from my wounds. "O you, Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,
Because he might have wish'd it—but we see
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
And think that you might mix his draught with death,
When your skies change again: the rougher hand
Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to attend

A tempest, thro' the cloud that
dimm'd her broke

A genial warmth and light once
more, and shone

Thro' glittering drops on her sad
friend.

"Come hither,
O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace
me, come

Quick while I melt; make reconcile-
ment sure

With one that cannot keep her mind
an hour:

Come to the hollow heart they slander
so!

Kiss and be friends, like children
being chid!

I seem no more: *I* want forgiveness
too:

I should have had to do with none
but maids,

That have no links with men. Ah
false but dear,

Dear traitor, too much loved, why? —
why? — Yet see,

Before these kings we embrace you
yet once more

With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait
upon him,

Like mine own brother. For my debt
to him,

This nightmare weight of gratitude, I
know it;

Taunt me no more: yourself and
yours shall have

Free adit; we will scatter all our
maids

Till happier times each to her proper
hearth:

What use to keep them here — now?
grant my prayer.

Help, father, brother, help; speak to
the king:

Thaw this male nature to some touch
of that

Which kills me with myself, and
drags me down

From my fixt height to mob me up
with all

The soft and milky rabble of woman-
kind,

Poor weakling ev'n as they are."

Passionate tears
Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril
said:

"Your brother, Lady — Florian,—
ask for him
Of your great head — for he is
wounded too —

That you may tend upon him with the
prince."

"Ay so," said Ida with a bitter smile,
"Our laws are broken: let him enter
too."

Then Violet, she that sang the mourn-
ful song,

And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. "Ay so," she
said,

"I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling
hour:

We break our laws with ease, but let
it be."

"Ay so?" said Blanche: "Amazed
am I to hear
Your Highness: but your Highness
breaks with ease

The law your Highness did not make:
'twas I.

I had been wedded wife, I knew man-
kind,

And block'd them out; but these men
came to woo

Your Highness — verily I think to
win."

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry
eye:

But Ida with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling
tower,

Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and
scorn.

"Fling our doors wide! all, all, not
one, but all,
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend
or foe,

Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls
flit,
Till the storm die! but had you stood
by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from
his base
Had left us rock. She fain would
sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with
your likes.
We brook no further insult but are
gone."

She turn'd; the very nape of her
white neck
Was rosed with indignation: but the
Prince
Her brother came; the king her father
charm'd
Her wounded soul with words: nor
did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his
hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead
weights, and bare
Straight to the doors: to them the
doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry
shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels:
And on they moved and gain'd the
hall, and there
Rested, but great the crush was, and
each base,
To left and right, of those tall columns
drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers: at the further
end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great
cats
Close by her, like supporters on a
shield,
Bow-back'd with fear: but in the cen-
tre stood
The common men with rolling eyes;
amazed
They glared upon the women, and
aghast
The women stared at these, all silent,
save

When armor clash'd or jingled,
while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall,
and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and
steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from head
to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the
helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on
flame,
And now and then an echo started
up,
And shuddering fled from room to
room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance:
And me they bore up the broad stairs,
and thro'
The long-laid galleries past a hundred
doors
To one deep chamber shut from
sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness; left
me in it;
And others otherwhere they laid; and
all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing
home
Till happier times; but some were left
of those
Held sagest, and the great lords out
and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside
the walls,
Walked at their will, and everything
was chang'd.

VII.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the
sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and
take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.
Ask me no more: what answer should I
give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more,

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital;
At first with all confusion: by and
by
Sweet order lived again with other
laws:
A kindlier influence reign'd; and
everywhere
Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick: the maidens
came, they talk'd,
They sang, they read: till she not fair
began
To gather light, and she that was, be-
came
Her former beauty treble; and to and
fro
With books, with flowers, with Angel
offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious
act,
And in their own clear element, they
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent
with shame.
Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke:
but oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone
for hours
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of
men
Darkening her female field: void was
her use,
And she as one that climbs a peak to
gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great
black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall
of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge
to shore,
And suck the blinding splendor from
the sand,

And quenching lake by lake and tarn
by tarn
Expunge the world: so fared she gaz-
ing there;
So blacken'd all her world in secret,
blank
And waste it seem'd and vain; till
down she came,
And found fair peace once more among
the sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by
morn the lark
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,
but I
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:
And twilight gloom'd; and broader-
grown the bowers
Drew the great night into themselves,
and Heaven,
Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could
reach me, lay
Quite sunder'd from the moving Uni-
verse,
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor
the hand
That nursed me, more than infants in
their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with
her oft,
Melissa came; for Blanche had gone,
but left
Her child among us, willing she should
keep
Court-favor: here and there the small
bright head,
A light of healing, glanced about the
couch,
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded
man
With blush and smile, a medicine in
themselves
To wile the length from languorous
hours, and draw
The sting from pain; nor seem'd it
strange that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair
charities

Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd
that hearts
So gentle, so employ'd, should close
in love,
Than when two dewdrops on the petal
shake
To the same sweet air, and tremble
deeper down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit
obtain'd
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche
had sworn
That after that dark night among the
fields
She needs must wed him for her own
good name;
Not tho' he built upon the babe re-
stored;
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she,
but fear'd
To incense the Head once more; till
on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she
hung
A moment, and she heard, at which
her face
A little flush'd, and she past on; but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent
involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were
at peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred
halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on
maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my
claim,
Nor did mine own now reconciled; nor
yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again
and whole;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she
sat:

Then came a change; for sometimes
I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
"You are not Ida;" clasp it once again,
And call her Ida, tho' I know her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold which
seem'd a truth:
And still she fear'd that I should lose
my mind,
And often she believed that I should
die:
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary
noons,
And watches in the dead, the dark,
when clocks
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace
floors, or call'd
On flying Time from all their silver
tongues—
And out of memories of her kindlier
days,
And sidelong glances at my father's
grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in
heart—
And out of hauntings of my spoken
love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd
dream,
And often feeling of the helpless
hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted
cheek—
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last,
to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung
with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail
at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close
to death
For weakness: it was evening: silent
light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein
were wrought

Two grand designs ; for on one side
arose
The women up in wild revolt, and
storm'd
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes,
they cramm'd
The forum, and half-crush'd among
the rest
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the
other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax; be-
hind,
A train of dames: by axe and eagle
sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in
Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in
their veins,
The fierce triumvirs; and before them
paused
Hortensia pleading: angry was her
face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where
I was :
They did but look like hollow shows;
nor more
Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat: the
dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her
shape
And rounder seem'd: I moved: I
sigh'd : a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears upon
my hand:
Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what
life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all un-
fold,
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the
sun.
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on
her
Sift my faint eyes, and utter'd whis-
peringly :

" If you be, what I think you, some
sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,

I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die
to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I
die."

I could no more, but lay like one in
trance,
That bears his burial talk'd of by his
friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor
make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She
turn'd; she paused;
She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt
a cry;
Leapt fiery Passion from the brink of
death;
And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms
she rose
Glowing all over noble shame; and all
Her fairer self slipt from her like a
robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in her
mood
Than in her mould that other, when
she came
From barren deeps to conquer all
with love;
And down the streaming crystal
dropt; and she
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they
deck'd her out
For worship without end; nor end of
mine,
Stateliest, for thee! but mute she
glided forth,
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank
and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a
happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near
me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land:
There to herself, all in low tones, she
read.

"Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold tin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me."

I heard her turn the page; she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low,
she read:

"Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the malice,
Or red with spirited purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet:
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay

Listening; then look'd. Pale was the perfect face;
The bosom with long sighs labor'd; and meek
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,
And the voice trembled and the hand.
She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
That all her labor was but as a block
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to one
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power
In knowledge: something wild within her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
And she had nursed me there from week to week:
Much had she learnt in little time.
In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl—
"Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce!
When comes another such? never, I think,
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs."

Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;
Till notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,

That early woke to feed her little ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for
light:
She moved, and at her feet the volume
fell.

"Blame not thyself too much," I said, "nor blame
Too much the sons of men and bar-
barous laws;
These were the rough ways of the
world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me,
that know
The woman's cause is man's: they
rise or sink
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or
free:
For she that out of Lethe scales with
man
The shining steps of Nature, shares
with man
His nights, his days, moves with him
to one goal,
Stays all the fair young planet in her
hands—
If she be small, slight-natured, miser-
able,
How shall men grow? but work no
more alone!
Our place is much: as far as in us lies
We two will serve them both in aid-
ing her—
Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up but drag
her down—
Will leave her space to burgeon out
of all
Within her—let her make herself
her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and
be
All that not harms distinctive woman-
hood.
For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse: could we make her as
the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest
bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they
grow;

The man be more of woman, she of
man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral
height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that
throw the world;
She mental breadth, nor fail in child-
ward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger
mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of
Time,
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all
their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing
each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other ev'n as those who
love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back
to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals,
chaste and calm:
Then springs the crowning race of
human-kind.
May these things be!"
Sighing she spoke "I fear
They will not."
"Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud
watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought
in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they
grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one
full stroke,
Life."

And again sighing she spoke: "A
dream
That once was mine! what woman
taught you this?"

"Alone," I said, "from earlier than
I know,

Immersed in rich foreshadowings of
the world,
I loved the woman : he, that doth not,
lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet
self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than
death,
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt
with crime :
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved
her, one
Not learned, save in gracious house-
hold ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender
wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all
dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Para-
dise,
Interpreter between the Gods and
men,
Who look'd all native to her place,
and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a
sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male
minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as
they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy
he
With such a mother ! faith in woman-
kind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all
things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip
and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

" But I,"

Said Ida, tremulously, " so all un-
like —
It seems you love to cheat yourself
with words:
This mother is your model. I have
heard
Of your strange doubts: they well
might be: I seem
A mockery to my own self. Never,
Prince;
You cannot love me."

" Nay but thee," I said

" From yearlong poring on thy pic-
tured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,
and saw
Thee woman thro' the crust of iron
moods
That mask'd thee from men's rever-
ence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boy-
hood: now,
Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro'
thee,
Indeed I love: the new day comes, the
light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for
faults
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts
are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows:
the change,
This truthful change in thee has kill'd
it. Dear,
Look up, and let thy nature strike on
mine,
Like yonder morning on the blind
half-world ;
Approach and fear not; breathe upon
my brows ;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour,
and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to-
come
Reels, as the golden Autumn wood-
land reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.
Forgive me,
I waste my heart in signs: let be. My
bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk this
world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro' those dark gates across
the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love
thee: come,
Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine
are one :
Accomplish thou my manhood and
thyself ;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and
trust to me."

CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give
you all
The random scheme as wildly as it
rose:
The words are mostly mine; for when
we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and
Walter said,
"I wish she had not yielded!" then to
me,
"What, if you drest it up poetically!"
So pray'd the men, the women: I gave
assent:
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme
of seven
Together in one sheaf? What style
could suit?
The men required that I should give
throughout
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we banter'd little Lilia
first:
The women — and perhaps they felt
their power,
For something in the ballads which
they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with bur-
lesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn
close —
They hated banter, wish'd for some-
thing real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess —
why
Not make her true-heroic — true-
sublime?
Or all, they said, as earnest as the
close?
Which yet with such a framework
scarce could be.
Then rose a little feud betwixt the
two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
And I, betwixt them both, to please
them both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself
nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took
no part
In our dispute: the sequel of the tale
Had touch'd her; and she sat, she
pluck'd the grass,
She flung it from her, thinking: last,
she fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and
said,
" You — tell us what we are" who
might have told,
For she was cramm'd with theories
out of books,
But that there rose a shout: the gates
were closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarm-
ing now,
To take their leave, about the garden
rails.
So I and some went out to these:
we climb'd
The slope to Vivian-place, and turn-
ing saw
The happy valleys, half in light, and
half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land
of peace;
Gray halls alone among their massive
groves;
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic
tower
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths
of wheat;
The shimmering glimpses of a stream;
the seas;
A red sail, or a white; and far be-
yond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts
of France.
" Look there, a garden!" said my
college friend,
The Tory member's elder son, " and
there!
God bless the narrow sea which keeps
her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole within
herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the
ruled —
Some sense of duty, something of a
faith,

Some reverence for the laws ourselves
have made,
Some patient force to change them
when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the
crowd —
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sud-
den heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his
head,
The king is scared, the soldier will
not fight,
The little boys begin to shoot and
stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls
the world
In mock heroics stranger than our
own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a schoolboys' barring
out;
Too comic for the solemn things they
are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in
them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise
a dream
As some of theirs — God bless the
narrow seas!
I wish they were a whole Atlantic
broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "our-
selves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest
dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the
truth:
For me, the genial day, the happy
crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a
faith,
This fine old world of ours is but a
child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give
it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand
that guides."

In such discourse we gain'd the
garden rails,

And there we saw Sir Walter where
he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head,
and look'd
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Eng-
lishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on
grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler
none;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy
morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now
him, of those
That stood the nearest — now ad-
dress'd to speech —
Who spoke few words and pithy, such
as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for
the year
To follow: a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching
rookery swerve
From the broad elms, and shook the
branches of the deer
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,
and rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a
shout
More joyful than the city-roar that
hails
Premier or king! Why should not
these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times
a year
To let the people breathe? So thrice
they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd
away.

But we went back to the Abbey,
and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness
charm'd: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless
reverie,

Perchance upon the future man: the
walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and
owls whoop'd,
And gradually the powers of the
night,
That range above the region of the
wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight
broke them up

Thro' all the silent spaces of the
worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven
of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of
Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-
pleased we went.

MAUD; A MONODRAMA.

PART I.

I.

I.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers "Death."

II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life — O father! O God! was it well? —
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

III.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

V.

Villany somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd. *dropt off*

VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

VII.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
 When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word ?
 Is it peace or war ? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
 The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
 Of the golden age — why not ? I have neither hope nor trust ;
 May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
 Cheat and be cheated, and die : who knows ? we are ashes and dust.

IX.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
 When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,
 When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie ;
 Peace in her vineyard — yes ! — but a company forges the wine.

X.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
 Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
 And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
 And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

XI.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits
 Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
 While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
 To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

XII.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
 And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
 Is it peace or war ? better, war ! loud war by land and by sea,
 War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

XIII.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
 And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
 That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
 And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home. —

XIV.

What ! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood ?
 Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
 Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
 On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie ?

XV.

Would there be sorrow for me? there was *love* in the passionate shriek,
 Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave —
 Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
 And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
 Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
 O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
 Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

XVII.

Workmen up at the Hall! — they are coming back from abroad;
 The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire:
 I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
 I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

XVIII.

Maud with her venturesome climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
 Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
 Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
 Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all, —

XIX.

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
 No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
 Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
 I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!
 It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savor nor salt,
 But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
 Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?
 All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
 Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before

Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

IV.

I.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime'
 In the little grove where I sit — ah, wherefore cannot I be
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land ?

II.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small !
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite ;
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar ;
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall ;
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light ;
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star !

III.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race ?
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd :
 I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor ;
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud :
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

IV.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal ;
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way :
 For nature is one' with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal ;
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

V.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower ;
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
 That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed ?
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour ;
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame ;
 However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

VI.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

VII.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

VIII.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

IX.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

X.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
Ah Maud, you milk-white fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

V.

I.

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to
me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,

In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

II.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the
sunny sky,

And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

III.

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI.

I.

Morning arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wamniss glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd
Caught and cuff'd by the gale:
I had fancied it would be fair.

II.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile
so sweet,
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

III.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark

Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a color'd flame;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

IV.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

V.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VI.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yestermorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

VII.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch
and ward,

Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and
good?

Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday
moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot
mouse,
And my own sad name in corners
cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is
thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have
grown
Of a world in which I have hardly
mixt.
And a morbid eating lichen figt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone."

IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and
caught
By that you swore to withstand?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of
love,
That made my tongue so stammer and
trip
When I saw the treasured splendor,
her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

X.

I have play'd with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,

If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

I.
Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair?

II.

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me;
" Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty: so let it be."

III.

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night?

IV.

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me;
" Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty; so let it be."

VIII.

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her
eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely
blush'd
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat
stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride, and mused
and sigh'd
" No surely, now it cannot be pride."

IX.

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone:
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
Then returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X.

I.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendor
plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's
head?
Whose old grandfather has lately died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
And laying his trams in a poison'd
gloom
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted
mine
Master of half a servile shire,
And left his coal all turn'd into gold
To a grandson, first of his noble line,
Rich in the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men
adore.
And simper and set their voices lower,
And soften as if to a girl, and hold
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
Now as his title, built last year,
There amid perky larches and pine,
And over the sullen-purple moor
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

II.

What, has he found my jewel out?
For one of the two that rode at her
side

Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a
bride.

Blithe would her brother's acceptance
be.

Maud could be gracious too, no doubt
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
And therefore splenic, personal,
base,

A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
At war with myself and a wretched
race,

Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III.

Last week came one to the county
town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot kings,
Tho' the state has done it and thrice
as well:
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy
things,
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton,
and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his
pence,
This huckster put down war! can he
tell
Whether war be a cause or a conse-
quence?
Put down the passions that make
earth Hell!
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
The bitter springs of anger and fear;
Down too, down at your own fireside,
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
For each is at war with mankind.

IV.

I wish I could hear again
The chivalrous battle-song
That she warbled alone in her joy!
I might persuade myself then
She would not do herself this great
wrong,
To take a wanton dissolute boy
For a man and leader of men.

V.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head,
hand,
Like some of the simple great ones
gone
For ever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat — one
Who can rule and dare not lie,

VI.

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be!

XI.

I.

O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet ;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me ;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII.

I.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

II.

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

III.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately ;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

V.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor !
O Maud were sure of Heaven
If lowliness could save her.

VI.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud ?
One is come to woo her.

VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charley snarling,
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII.

I.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I
scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret ?
That a calamity hard to be borne ?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride !
I past him, I was crossing his lands ;
He stood on the path a little aside ;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red
and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands ;
But his essence turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his
hands.

II.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship ;

But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopty, and then with a riding whip Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?
That old man never comes to his place :
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen ?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat ;

For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue ;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side ;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied,
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin :
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

IV.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

XIV.

I.

Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn ;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate ;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

II.

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone

Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roysterer company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate :
And I thought as I stood, if a hand,
as white

As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my
Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious
ghost, to glide,
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven,
down to my side,
There were but a step to be made.

III.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold ;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

IV.

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood ;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as
it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;
But I look'd, and round, all round the
house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn ;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain
meant but sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a
fool of the sleep of death.

XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if I be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much
to fear ;
But if I be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more
dear.

Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else.

XVI.

L.

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight;
And so that he find what he went to
seek,
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of
town,
He may stay for a year who has gone
for a week:
But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,
O this is the day!
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way;
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her
breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender
dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her
feet
To the grace that, bright and light as
the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it.
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from
crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

II.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool
lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low?
Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even for
me?
I trust that it is not so.

III.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous
heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my
eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
Over glowing ships;
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news.
Blush it thro' the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East.
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII.

L.

I have led her home, my love, my
only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my
blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for
end,
Full to the banks, close on the prom-
ised good.

II.

None like her, none.
 Just now the dry-tongued laurel's
 patterning talk
 Seem'd her light foot along the
 garden walk,
 And shook my heart to think she
 comes once more;
 But even then I heard her close the
 door,
 The gates of Heaven are closed, and
 she is gone.

III.

There is none like her, none.
 Nor will be when our summers have
 deceased.
 O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
 In the long breeze that streams to thy
 delicious East,
 Sighing for Lebanon,
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here
 increased,
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
 And looking to the South, and fed
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,
 And haunted by the starry head
 Of her whose gentle will has changed
 my fate,
 And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
 And over whom thy darkness must
 have spread
 With such delight as theirs of old,
 thy great
 Forefathers of the thornless garden,
 there
 Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from
 whom she came.

IV.

Here will I lie, while these long
 branches sway,
 And you fair stars that crown a
 happy day
 Go in and out as if at merry play,
 Who am no more so all forlorn,
 As when it seem'd far better to be
 born
 To labor and the mattock-harden'd
 hand,

Than nursed at ease and brought to
 understand
 A sad astrology, the boundless plan
 That makes you tyrants in your iron
 skies,
 Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
 Cold'fires, yet with power to burn and
 brand
 His nothingness into man.

V.

But now shine on, and what care I,
 Who in this stormy gulf have found a
 pearl
 The countercharm of space and hol-
 low sky,
 And do accept my madness, and would
 die
 To save from some slight shame one
 simple girl.

VI.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death
 may give
 More life to Love than is or ever was
 In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet
 to live.
 Let no one ask me how it came to
 pass;
 It seems that I am happy, that to me
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the
 grass,
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII.

Not die; but live a life of truest
 breath,
 And teach true life to fight with
 mortal wrongs.
 O, why should Love, like men in
 drinking-songs,
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust
 of death?
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,
 Maud made my Maud by that long
 loving kiss,
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer
 this?
 "The dusky strand of Death inwoven
 here
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love
 himself more dear."

VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell,
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
It is but for a little space I go:
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw — but it shall not be so:
Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

I.

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

II.

My dream? do I dream of bliss?
I have walk'd awake with Truth,
O when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this ^{ASARND}?
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and mine:
For who was left to watch her but I?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

III.

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk
(For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless things)
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin:
I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin,
That I felt she was slowly dying
Next with lawyers and harass'd with debt:
For how often I caught her with eyes
all wet,
Shaking her head at her son and sighing
A world of trouble within!

IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share
her heart,
And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with blood
By which our houses are torn:
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed —
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till
death.
Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn.

v.

But the true blood spilt had in it a
heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a
bond,
That, if left uncaneell'd, had been so
sweet:
And none of us thought of a some-
thing beyond,
A desire that awoke in the heart of
the child,
As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be re-
conciled;
And I was cursing them and my
doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run
wild
While often abroad in the fragrant
gloom
Of foreign churches — I see her
there,
Bright English lily, breathing a
prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled!

vi.

But then what a flint is he!
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years be-
fore;
And this was what had redden'd her
cheek
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

vii.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay

Sick once, with a fear of worse,
Then he left his wine and horses and
play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and
day,
And tended her like a nurse.

viii.

Kind? but the deathbed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —
Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind; why let it be
so:
For shall not Maud have her will?

ix.

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours;
O then, what then shall I say? —
If ever I should forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet!

x.

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate,
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I
fear,
Fantastically merry;
But that her brother comes, like a
blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-
night.

xx.

i.

Strange, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day
To beguile her melancholy;
The Sultan, as we name him,—

She did not wish to blame him —
 But he vexed her and perplexed her
 With his worldly talk and folly :
 Was it gentle to reprove her
 For stealing out of view
 From a little lazy lover
 Who but claims her as his due ?
 Or for chilling his caresses
 By the coldness of her manners,
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?
 Now I know her but in two,
 Nor can pronounce upon it
 If one should ask me whether
 The habit, hat, and feather,
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
 Be the neater and completer ;
 For nothing can be sweeter
 Than maiden Maud in either.

II.

But to-morrow, if we live,
 Our ponderous squire will give
 A grand political dinner
 To half the squires near ;
 And Maud will wear her jewels,
 And the bird of prey will hover,
 And the titmouse hope to win her
 With his chirrup at her ear.

III.

A grand political dinner
 To the men of many acres,
 A gathering of the Tory,
 A dinner and then a dance
 For the maids and marriage-makers,
 And every eye but mine will glance
 At Maud in all her glory.

IV.

For I am not invited,
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,
 I am all as well delighted,
 For I know her own rose-garden,
 And mean to linger in it
 Till the dancing will be over ;
 And then, oh then, come out to me
 For a minute, but for a minute,
 Come out to your own true lover,
 That your true lover may see
 Your glory also, and render
 All homage to his own darling,
 Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,
 And bringing me down from the
 Hall
 This garden-rose that I found,
 Forgetful of Maud and me,
 And lost in trouble and moving round
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
 And trying to pass to the sea ;
 O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
 My Maud has sent it by thee
 (If I read her sweet will right)
 On a blushing mission to me,
 Saying in odor and color, " Ah, be
 Among the roses to-night."

XXII.

I.

Come into the garden, Maud,
 For the black bat, night, has flown,
 Come into the garden, Maud,
 I am here at the gate alone ;
 And the woodbine spices are wafted
 abroad,
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

II.

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that
 she loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
 To faint in the light of the sun she
 loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die.

III.

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon ;
 All night has the casement jessamine
 stirr'd
 To the dancers dancing in tune ;
 Till a silence fell with the waking
 bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

IV.

I said to the lily, " There is but one
 With whom she has heart to be gay.
 When will the dancers leave her
 alone ?

She is weary of dance and play." Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

V.

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
"For ever and ever, mine."

VI.

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII.

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;

But the rose was awake all night for your sake,

Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,

In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

X.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

XI.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthly bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

PART II.

I.

"THE fault was mine, the fault was mine"—
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—
It is this guilty hand!—
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land—
What is it, that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,
The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,

When her brother ran in his rage to
the gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord ;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to
be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the
face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by :
Struck for himself an evil stroke ;
Wrought for his house an irredeem-
able woe ;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing
echoes broke
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind
the wood,
And thunder'd up into Heaven the
Christless code,
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to
grow.
Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?
"The fault was mine," he whisper'd,
"fly!"
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I
know ;
And there rang on a sudden a pas-
sionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood :
It will ring in my heart and my ears,
till I die, till I die.

II.

Is it gone ? my pulses beat —
What was it ? a lying trick of the
brain ?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a
gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown
with deluging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger
and lust,
The little hearts that know not how
to forgive :

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold
Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of
venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust ;
We are not worthy to live.

II.

I.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design !

II.

What is it ? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world ?

IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

V.

Breton, not Briton ; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear —

Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main —
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed,
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

VI.

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech is mine.

VII.

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part—
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,—
That it should, by being so over-
wrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and
thought
It is his mother's hair.

IX.

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?

However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things
good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and
high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her
asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the
deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

III.

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at
hand
When thou shalt more than die.

IV.

I.
O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

II.

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than anything on earth.

III.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee:
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might
tell us
What and where they be.

IV.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

VI.

"Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
"Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,

Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That will show itself without.

IX.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and
loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say "Forgive the wrong,"
Or to ask her, "Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest"?

XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me:
Always I long to creep

Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

V.

I.

Dead, long dead,
Long dead !
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are
thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat,
beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of
passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and
clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but
it is not so ;
To have no peace in the grave, is that
not sad ?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go ;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

II.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man ;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the
days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was
read ;
It is that which makes us loud in the
world of the dead ;
There is none that does his work, not
one ;
A touch of their office might have
sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill
their church,
As the churches have kill'd their
Christ.

III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress ;
And another, a lord of all things,
praying
To his own great self, as I guess ;
And another, a statesman there, be-
traying
His party-secret, fool, to the press ;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for
what ?
To tickle the maggot born in an
empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him
not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble !
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold ;
Not let any man think for the public
good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from
the top of the house ;
Everything came to be known.
Who told him we were there ?

V.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came
not back
From the wilderness, full of wolves,
where he used to lie ;
He has gather'd the bones for his
o'ergrown whelp to crack ;
Crack them now for yourself, and
howl, and die.

VI.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the
rat ;
I know not whether he came in the
Hanover ship,

But I know that he lies and listens
 mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies and
 holes :
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
Except that now we poison our babes,
 poor souls !
It is all used up for that.

VII.

Tell him now : she is standing here at
 my head ;
Not beautiful now, not even kind ;
He may take her now ; for she never
 speaks her mind,
But is ever the one thing silent here.
She is not *of us*, as I divine ;
She comes from another stiller world
 of the dead,
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

VIII.

But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world be-
 side,
All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the season
 is good,
To the sound of dancing music and
 flutes :
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
And I almost fear they are not roses,
 but blood ;
For the keeper was one, so full of
 pride,
He linkt a dead man there to a spec-
 tral bride ;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of
 brutes,
Would he have that hole in his side ?

IX.

But what will the old man say ?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy
 day ;
Yet now I could even weep to think
 of it ;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second corpse
 in the pit ?

X.

Friend, to be struck by the public
 foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from
 sin ;
But the red life spilt for a private
 blow —
I swear to you, lawful and lawless
 war
Are scarcely even akin.

XI.

O me, why have they not buried me
 deep enough ?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so
 rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?
Maybe still I am but half-dead ;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;
I will cry to the steps above my head
And somebody, surely, some kind
 heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

PART III.

VI.

I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing :
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,

And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
 That like a silent lightning under the stars
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
 And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—
 “ And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
 Knowing I tarry for thee,” and pointed to Mars
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,
 That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;
 And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair
 When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire :
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

III.

phantom
 And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
 “ It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,” said I
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
 “ It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
 That old hysterical mock-disease should die.”
 And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
 With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
 Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
 And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
 And hail once more to the banner of battle untoll'd !
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
 Yet God's just wrath shall be break'd on a giant liar;
 And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
 And noble thought be freér under the sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;

For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

v.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

ENOCH ARDEN

AND OTHER POEMS.

ENOCH ARDEN.

Long lines of cliff breaking have left
a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church;
and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows; and a hazel-wood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,
play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty-fluke, and boats up-drawn;

And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow'd, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:
In this the children play'd at keeping house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week:
"This is my house and this my little wife."
"Mine too" said Philip "turn and turn about":
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-made
Was master: then would Philip, his blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out "I hate you, Enoch," and at this
The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
 And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
 Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
 On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
 But Philip loved in silence; and the girl
 Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;
 But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,
 And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
 A purpose evermore before his eyes,
 To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
 To purchase his own boat, and make a home
 For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last
 A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
 A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
 For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
 Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
 On board a merchantman, and made himself
 Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
 From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas:
 And all men look'd upon him favorably:
 And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May,
 He purchased his own boat, and made a home
 For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
 The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn even-tide,
 The younger people making holiday,
 With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
 Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd

(His father lying sick and needing him)
 An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,
 Just where the prone edge of the wood began
 To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
 Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
 His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face
 All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
 That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
 And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
 Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
 And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
 Crept down into the hollows of the wood;
 There, while the rest were loud in merrymaking,
 Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
 Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
 And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
 Seven happy years of health and competence,
 And mutual love and honorable toil;
 With children; first a daughter. In him woke,
 With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
 To save all earnings to the uttermost,
 And give his child a better bringing-up
 Than his had been, or hers; a wish renew'd,
 When two years after came a boy to be
 The rosy idol of her solitudes,
 While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
 Or often journeying landward; for in truth
 Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil

twigs of the willow used in making basket

In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down;
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.
Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven: thither used Enoch at times to go by land or sea;
And once when there, and clambering on a mast
In harbor, by mischance he slipt and fell:
A limb was broken when they lifted him;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one:
Another hand crept too across his trade.
Taking her bread and theirs' and on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her, he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd
"Save them from this, whatever comes to me."
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,

And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?
And Enoch all at once assented to it, rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
And isles a light in the offing: yet the wife —
When he was gone — the children — what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans;
To sell the boat — and yet he loved her well —
How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!
He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse —
And yet to sell her — then with what she brought
Buy goods and stores — set Annie forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or their wives —
So might she keep the house while he was gone.
Should he not trade himself out yonder? go
This voyage more than once? yea twice or thrice —
As oft as needed — last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born. Forward she started with a happy cry,

And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his
limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled
fatherlike,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he
spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring
had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his
will:
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night re-
new'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of
it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in
vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore it
thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-
friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and
set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-
room
With shelf and corner for the goods
and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at
home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer
and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to
hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd
and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful
hand,—
The space was narrow,—having or-
der'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature
packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused;
and he,

Who needs would work for Annie to
the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of
farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's
fears,
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter
to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mys-
tery
Where God-in-man is one with man-
in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and
babes
Whatever came to him: and then he
said
"Annie, this voyage by the grace of
God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for
me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you
know it."
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle
"and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—
Nay — for I love him all the better for
it —
God bless him, he shall sit upon my
knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign
parts,
And make him merry, when I come
home again.
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I
go."

Him running on thus hopefully she
heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when
he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven,
she heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the vil-
lage girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the
spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it for
her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it over-
flow.

At length she spoke "O Enoch, you
are wise;
And yet for all your wisdom well
know I
That I shall look upon your face no
more."

"Well then," said Enoch, "I shall
look on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here
(He named the day) get you a seaman's
glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your
fears."

But when the last of those last
moments came,
"Annie, my girl, cheer up, be com-
forted,
Look to the babes, and till I come
again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must
go.
And fear no more for me; or if you
fear
Cast all your cares on God; that an-
chor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His: He made it."

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his droop-
ing wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little
ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who
slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him
Enoch said.
"Wake him not; let him sleep; how
should the child
Remember this?" and kiss'd him in
his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead
clipt

A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept
Thro' all his future; but now hastily
caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went
his way.

She, when the day that Enoch
mention'd, came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain:
perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her
eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand trem-
ulous;
She saw him not: and while he stood
on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel
past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing
sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping
for him;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as
his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with
his,
But threw not in her trade, not being
bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding "what would
Enoch say?"
For more than once, in days of diffi-
culty
And pressure, had she sold her wares
for less
Than what she gave in buying what
she sold:
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it;
and thus,
Expectant of that news which never
came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty sus-
tance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born
and grew
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for
it

With all a mother's care: nevertheless,
Whether her business often call'd her
from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed
most,
Or means to pay the voice who best
could tell
What most it needed—howsoe'er it
was,
After a lingering,—ere she was
aware,—
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie
buried it,
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for
her peace
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd
upon her),
Smote him, as having kept aloof so
long
“Surely,” said Philip, “I may see her
now,
May be some little comfort”; there-
fore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one
opening,
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her
grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one,
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall
and wept.
Then Philip standing up said falter-
ingly
“Annie, I came to ask a favor of you.”

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd
reply
“Favor from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am!” half abash'd him; yet
unmask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He set himself beside her, saying to
her:

“I came to speak to you of what he
wish'd,

Enoch, your husband: I have ever
said
You chose the best among us—a
strong man:
For where he fixt his heart he set his
hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it
thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary
way,
And leave you lonely? not to see the
world—
For pleasure? — nay, but for the
wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours: that was
his wish.
And if he come again, vext will he be
To find the precious morning hours
were lost.
And it would vex him even in his
grave,
If he could know his babes were run-
ning wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,
now—
Have we not known each other all our
lives?
I do beseech you by the love you
bear
Him and his children not to say me
nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes
again
Why then he shall repay me—if you
will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to
school:
This is the favor that I came to ask.”

Then Annie with her brows against
the wall
Answer'd “I cannot look you in the
face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke
me down;
And now I think your kindness breaks
me down;
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on
me:

He will repay you: money can be repaid;
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd
"Then you will let me, Annie?"

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and everyway,
Like one who does his duty by his own, Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port, He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall, Or eones from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;

From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where; and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd To go with others, nutting to the wood, And Annie would go with them; then they begg'd For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him "Come with us Father Philip" he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go, He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, all her force Fail'd her; and sighing, "Let me rest" she said:
So Philip rested with her well-content;

While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
 Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
 Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
 To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
 The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
 Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
 And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
 Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
 Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
 He crept into the shadow: at last he said,
 Lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie,
 How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
 Tired, Annie?" for she did not speak a word.
 "Tired?" but her face had fall'n upon her hands;
 At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
 "The ship was lost," he said, "the ship was lost!
 No more of that! why should you kill yourself
 And make them orphans quite?" And Annie said
 "I thought not of it: but—I know not why—
 Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
 "Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
 And it has been upon my mind so long,
 That tho' I know not when it first came there,
 I know that it will out at last. O Annie,

It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
 That he who left you ten long years ago
 Should still be living; well then—let me speak:
 I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:
 I cannot help you as I wish to do
 Unless—they say that women are so quick—
 Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
 I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
 A father to your children: I do think
 They love me as a father: I am sure
 That I love them as if they were mine own;
 And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
 That after all these sad uncertain years,
 We might be still as happy as God grants
 To any of his creatures. Think upon it:
 For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
 No burthen, save my care for you and yours:
 And we have known each other all our lives,
 And I have loved you longer than you know."

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:
 "You have been as God's good angel in our house.
 God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
 Philip, with something happier than myself.
 Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
 As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?"
 "I am content" he answer'd "to be loved
 A little after Enoch." "O" she cried,

Scared as it were, "dear Philip, wait
a while :
If Enoch comes — but Enoch will not
come —

Yet wait a year, a year is not so long :
Surely I shall be wiser in a year :
O wait a little!" Philip sadly said
"Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little." "Nay" she
cried

"I am bound : you have my promise
— in a year :
Will you not bide your year as I bide
mine ?"
And Philip answer'd "I will bide my
year."

Here both were mute, till Philip
glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen
day
Pass from the Danish barrow over-
head ;
Then fearing night and chill for
Annie, rose
And sent his voice beneath him thro'
the wood.
Up came the children laden with their
spoil ;
Then all descended to the port, and there
At Annie's door he paused and gave
his hand,
Saying gently "Annie, when I spoke
to you,
That was your hour of weakness. I
was wrong,
I am always bound to you, but you
are free."
Then Annie weeping answer'd "I am
bound."

She spoke ; and in one moment as
it were,
While yet she went about her house-
hold ways,
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest
words,
That he had loved her longer than she
knew,
That autumn into autumn flash'd
again,

And there he stood once more before
her face,
Claiming her promise. "Is it a year ?"
she ask'd.

"Yes, if the nuts" he said "be ripe
again :
Come out and see." But she — she
put him off —
So much to look to — such a change
— a month —

Give her a month — she knew that
she was bound —
A month — no' more. Then Philip
with his eyes
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his
voice

Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
"Take your own time, Annie, take
your own time."

And Annie could have wept for pity
of him ;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-suffer-
ance,
Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but
trifle with her ;
Some that she but held off to draw
him on ;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip
too,
As simple folk that knew not their
own minds,
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly
Would hint at worse in either. Her
own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his
wish ;
But evermore the daughter prest upon
her
To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty ;
And Philip's rosy face contracting
grew
Careworn and wan ; and all these
things fell on her

Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chaneed
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
Pray'd for a sign "my Enoch is he
gone?"
Then compass'd round by the blind
wall of night
Brook'd not the expectant terror of
her heart,
Started from bed, and struck herself
a light,
Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the text,
"Under the palm-tree." That was
nothing to her:
No meaning there: she closed the
Book and slept:
When lo! her Enoch sitting on a
height,
Under a palm-tree, over him the
Sun:
"He is gone," she thought, "he is
happy, he is singing
Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these
be palms
Whereof the happy people strowing
cried
'Hosanna in the highest!'" Here
she woke,
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly
to him
"There is no reason why we should
not wed."
"Then for God's sake," he answer'd,
"both our sakes,
So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang
the bells,
Merrily rang the bells and they were
wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her
path,
She knew not whence; a whisper on
her ear,
She knew not what; nor loved she to
be left

Alone at home, nor ventured out
alone.
What ail'd her then, that ere she
enter'd, often
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the
latch,
Fearing to enter: Philip thought he
knew:
Such doubts and fears were common
to her state,
Being with child: but when her child
was born,
Then her new child was as herself
renew'd,
Then the new mother came about her
heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly
died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously sail'd
The ship "Good Fortune," tho' at
setting forth
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,
shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet
unvext
She slipt across the summer of the
world,
Then after a long tumble about the
Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and
fair,
She passing thro' the summer world
again,
The breath of heaven came continually
And sent her sweetly by the golden
isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself,
and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of
those times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at
first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by
day,

Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from
her bows :
Then follow'd calms, and then winds
variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them ;
and last
Storm, such as drove her under moon-
less heavens
Till hard upon the cry of "breakers" came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the
night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and
broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at
morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human suste-
nance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nour-
ishing roots ;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was
tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-
gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves
of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the
three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-
content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more
than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and
wreck,
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-
in-life.
They could not leave him. After he
was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen
stem ;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of
himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion,
fell

Sun-stricken, and that other lived
alone.
In those two deaths he read God's
warning "wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak,
the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways
to Heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of
plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of
bird,
The lustre of the long convolvulus
That coil'd around the stately stems,
and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the
world,
All these he saw; but what he fain
had seen
He could not see, the kindly human
face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-
fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on
the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees
that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the
sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the
wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all
day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a
sail :
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and
precipices ;
The blaze upon the waters to the east ;
The blaze upon his island overhead ;
The blaze upon the waters to the west ;
Then the great stars that globed
themselves in Heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and
again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise — but no
sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd
to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him
paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms
moved
Before him haunting him, or he him-
self
Moved haunting people, things and
places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the line;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the
small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the
leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely
Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold,
the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming
downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying
leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-color'd
seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his
ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily — far and far
away —
He heard the pealing of his parish
bells;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore,
started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous
hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor
heart
Spoken with That, which being every-
where
Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem
all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering
head
The sunny and rainy seasons came
and went
Year after year. His hopes to see
his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar
fields,

Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely
doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another
ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling
winds,
Like the Good Fortune, from her
destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where
she lay:
For since the mate had seen at early
dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen
isle
The silent water slipping from the
hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst
away
In search of stream or fount, and
fill'd the shores
With clamor. Downward from his
mountain gorge
Stept the long-hair'd, long-bearded
solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human,
strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it
seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making
signs
They knew not what: and yet he led
the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water
ran;
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-
bounden tongue
Was loosen'd, till he made them
understand;
Whom, when their casks were fill'd
they took aboard:
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce-credited at first but more and
more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd
to it:
And clothes they gave him and free
passage home;
But oft he work'd among the rest and
shook
His isolation from him. None of
these

Came from his country, or could answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.
And dull the voyage was with long delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall :
And that same morning officers and men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves, pitying the lonely man, and gave him it :
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev'n in that harbor whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
But homeward — home — what home ? had he a home ?
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,
Sunny but chill ; till drawn thro' either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray ;
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down :
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom ;

Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born ;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking "dead or dead to me !"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone ; but he was gone
Who kept it ; and his widow Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house ;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Stiller, with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing — Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken — all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,

Her slow consent, and marriage, and
the birth
Of Philip's child: and o'er his coun-
tenance
No shadow past, nor motion: any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt
the tale
Less than the teller: only when she
closed
"Enoch, poor man, was cast away and
lost"
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
Repeated muttering "cast away and
lost";
Again in deeper inward whispers
"lost!"

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face
again;
"If I might look on her sweet face
again
And know that she is happy." So the
thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove
him forth,
At evening when the dull November
day
Was growing duller twilight, to the
hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below;
There did a thousand memories roll
upon him,
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's
house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze al-
lures
The bird of passage, till he madly
strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary
life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the
street,
The latest house to landward; but be-
hind,
With one small gate that open'd on
the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and
wall'd:

And in it thrrove an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk
and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and thence
That which he better might have
shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch
saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd
board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the
hearth:
And on the right hand of the hearth
he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his
knees;
And o'er her second father stoopt a
girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her
lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his
creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they
laugh'd;
And on the left hand of the hearth he
saw
The mother glancing often toward her
babe,
But turning now and then to speak
with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and
strong,
And saying that which pleased him,
for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life
beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the
babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's
knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the
happiness,
And his own children tall and beauti-
ful,

And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's love,—
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

"Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour,
Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
A little longer! aid me, give me strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her peace.
My children too! must I not speak to these?

They know me not. I should betray myself.
Never: No father's kiss for me—the girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my son."

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little,
And he lay tranced; but when he rose and paced
Back toward his solitary home again,
All down the long and narrow street he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
"Not to tell her, never to let her know."

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
Prayer from a living source within the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
Kept him a living soul. "This miller's wife"
He said to Miriam "that you spoke about,
Has she no fear that her first husband lives?"
"Ay, ay, poor soul" said Miriam, "fear know!
If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
Why, that would be her comfort;" and he thought
"After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,
I wait His time," and Enoch set himself,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd

At lading and unlading the tall barks,
That brought the stinted commerce
of those days;
Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:
Yet since he did but labor for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life
in it
Whereby the man could live; and as
the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the
day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor
came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do
no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last
his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheer-
fully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded
wreck
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting
squall
The boat that bears the hope of life
approach
To save the life despair'd of, than he
saw
Death dawning on him, and the close
of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a
kindlier hope
On Enoch thinking "after I am
gone,
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the
last."
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and
said
"Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
Before I tell you—swear upon the
book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."
"Dead," clamor'd the good woman,
"hear him talk!
I warrant, man, that we shall bring
you round."
"Swear" added Enoch sternly "on
the book."
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam
swore.

Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon
her,
"Did you know Enoch Arden of this
town?"
"Know him?" she said "I knew him
far away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the
street;
Held his head high, and cared for no
man, he."
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd
her;
"His head is low, and no man cares
for him.
I think I have not three days more to
live;
I am the man." At which the woman
gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical
cry.
"You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was
a foot
Higher than you be." Enoch said
again
"My God has bow'd me down to what
I am;
My grief and solitude have broken
me;
Nevertheless, know you that I am he
Who married—but that name has
twice been changed—
I married her who married Philip
Ray.
Sit, listen." Then he told her of his
voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming
back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
And how he kept it. As the woman
heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy
tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incess-
antly
To rush abroad all round the little
haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his
woes;
But awed and promise-bounden she
forbore,
Saying only "See your bairns before
you go!"

Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and arose
 Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
 A moment on her words, but then replied:

" Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
 But let me hold my purpose till I die.
 Sit down again; mark me and understand,
 While I have power to speak. I charge you now,
 When you shall see her, tell her that I died
 Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
 Save for the bar between us, loving her
 As when she laid her head beside my own.
 And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
 So like her mother, that my latest breath
 Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.
 And tell my son that I died blessing him.
 And say to Philip that I blest him too;
 He never meant us any thing but good.
 But if my children care to see me dead,
 Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
 I am their father; but she must not come,
 For my dead face would vex her after-life.
 And now there is but one of all my blood

Who will embrace me in the world-to-be:
 This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it,
 And I have borne it with me all these years.
 And thought to bear it with me to my grave;
 But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
 My babe in bliss: wherefore when I am gone,
 Take, give her this, for it may comfort her:
 It will moreover be a token to her, That I am he."

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
 Made such a voluble answer promising all,
 That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
 Repeating all he wish'd, and once again She promised.

Then the third night after this,
 While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
 And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
 There came so loud a calling of the sea,
 That all the houses in the haven rang.
 He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad
 Crying with a loud voice "A sail! a sail!
 I am saved;" and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
 And when they buried him the little port
 Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBITU MDCCLXXXIII.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy
face,

By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and
shade;
Thou madest Life in man and
brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy
foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not
why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art
just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood,
thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not
how;
Our wills are ours, to make them
thine.

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease
to be:
They are but broken lights of
thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from
thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to
more,
But more of reverence in us
dwell;

That mind and soul, according
well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not
fear:

But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light,

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I
began;

For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so
fair.

I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering
cries,

Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in
truth,

And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-
stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to
catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be
drown'd,

Let darkness keep her raven
gloss :
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the
ground,
Than that the victor Hours should
scorn
The long result of love, and
boast,
"Behold the man that loved and
lost,
But all he was is overworn."

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the
flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the
clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of
gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip ?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly
run ;
A web is wov'n across the sky ;
From out waste places comes a
cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun :

"And all the phantom, Nature,
stands —
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own, —
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good ;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away ;
My will is bondsman to the dark ;
I sit within a helmeless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou should'st fail from thy
desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
"What is it makes me beat so low ? "

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early
years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling
tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd
eyes ;
With morning wakes the will, and
cries,
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel ;
For words, like Nature, half re-
veal

And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies ;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the
cold :

But that large grief which these
enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes, that "Other friends re-
main,"
That "Loss is common to the
race"—

And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning
wore

To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be
done,

Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is
how'd
His heavy-shotted hammock-
shroud

Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him
well;

Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something
thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, "here to-
day,"

Or "here to-morrow will he come."

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;

And thinking "this will please
him best,"
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color
burns;
And, having left the glass, she
turns

Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the
ford,

Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII.

Dark house, by which once more I
stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used
to beat

So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling
rain
On the bald street breaks the blank
day.

VIII.

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gate-
way bell,
And learns her gone and far from
home;

He saddens, all the magic light

Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying, there at least may die.

IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X.

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night:
I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies: O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI.

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,

And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redder to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; "Comes he thus, my friend ?
Is this the end of all my care ?"
And circle moaning in the air :
"Is this the end ? Is this the end ?"

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms,
and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed ;
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my chofee,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,
I do not suffer in a dream :
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

xiv.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine ;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state

And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,

I should not feel it to be strange.

xv.

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day:

The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree

The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass.
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a laboring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

xvi.

What words are these have fall'n
from me?
Can calm despair and wild unrest
Be tenants of a single breast,

Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
The touch of change in calm or storm;
But knows no more of transient form

In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunn'd me from my power to think

And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

xvii.

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week: the days go by:
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark;
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by
thee;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII.

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may
stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the
head
That sleeps or wears the mask of
sleep,
And come, whatever loves to
weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips
impart
The life that almost dies in me;
That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer
mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot
find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no
more;
They laid him by the pleasant
shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling
Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of
all,
When fill'd with tears that can
not fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender
vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the
mind:
"It will be hard," they say, "to
find
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort
win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain
freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of
Death,
And scarce endure to draw the
breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and
think,
"How good! how kind! and he is
gone."

XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me
wave,

I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to
blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he
speak :
" This fellow would make weak-
ness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, " Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth : " Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people
throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

" A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her
arms
To feel from world to world, and
charms
Her secret from the latest moon ? "

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :
Ye never knew the sacred dust :
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have
ranged ;
And one is sad ; her note is
changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

xxii.

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased
us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and
fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to
snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And, crown'd with all the season
gent,

From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and
cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the
fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in the
waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

xxiii.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I
came,
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where
it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was
dumb ;
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy
caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed
with Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with
Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could
bring,

And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang.
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arealy.

xxiv.

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of
night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so
great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

xxv.

I know that this was life,—the track
Whereon with equal feet we
fared;
And then, as now, the day pre-
pared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave
in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

xxvi.

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker
Love,

Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power
to see
Within the green the moulder'd
tree,

And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That shadow waiting with the
keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

xxvii.

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted
troth
But stagnates in the weeds of
sloth;

Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, what'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

xxviii.

The time draws near the birth of
Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;

The Christmas bells from hill to
hill
Answer each other in the mist.
Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and
moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound :
Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now de-
crease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and
peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.
This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would
break
Before I heard those bells again :
But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd mewhen a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd
with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;
Which brings no more a welcome
guest
To enrich the threshold of the
night
With shower'd largess of delight
In dance and song and game and jest ?
Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use
and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house ;
Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;
Why should they miss their
yearly due
Before their time ? They too will
die.

XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas
hearth ;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.
At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambol'd, making vain pre-
tence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.
We paused : the winds were in the
beech :
We heard them sweep the winter
land ;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.
Then echo-like our voices rang ;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year : impetuously we sang :
We ceased : a gentler feeling crept
Upon us : surely rest is meet :
“ They rest,” we said, “ their sleep
is sweet,”
And silence follow'd, and we wept.
Our voices took a higher range ;
Once more we sang : “ They do
not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they
change ;
“ Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the
same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.”
Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from
night :
O Father, touch the east, and
light
The light that shone when Hope was
born.

XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave ?

"Where wert thou, brother, those
four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful
sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something
seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;

What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is their blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
Twere hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,

To drop head-foremost in the
jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV.

Yet if some voice that man could
trust
Should murmur from the narrow
house,
“The cheeks drop in; the body
bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:”

Might I not say? “ Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive: ”
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift
or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and
sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
“The sound of that forgetful
shore
Will change my sweetness more
and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die.”

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were
seen
At first as Death, Love had not
been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd
the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall
fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and
wrought
With human hands the creed of
creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;
Which he may read that binds the
sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the
grave,
And those wild eyes that watch
the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:
“Thou pratest here where thou
art least;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

“Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.”

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
“I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

“For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

“But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said),

“I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth re-
veal'd;
And loiter'd in the master's field,
And darken'd sanctities with song.”

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits render'd free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

Old warden of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow — fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,—
What whisper'd from her lying lips?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

XL.

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise
To take her latest leave of home,

And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her boast,
Till even those that miss'd her most
Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher;
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound

Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII.

I vex my heart with fancies dim:
He still outstript me in the race;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLIII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom

Thro' all its interval gloom
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead?
For here the man is more and more;
But he forgets the days before.
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense

Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean springs),
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV.

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I."

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of "I," and
"me,"
And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may
begin,
As thro' the frame that binds him
in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their
due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI.

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and
flower,
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the
tomb,
But clear from marge to marge
shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
The fruitful hours of still increase;
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching
far;
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII.

That each, who seems a separate
whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing
all
The skirts of self again, should
fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good:
What vaster dream can hit the
mood

Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and
say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in
light."

XLVIII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here
proposed,
Then these were such as men might
scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
She takes, when harsher moods
remit,
What slender shade of doubt may
flit,

And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with
words,
But better serves a wholesome
law,
And holds it sin and shame to
draw
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that
dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX.

From art, from nature, from the
schools,
Let random influences glance,

Like light in many a shiver'd lance
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy
wreathe,
The slightest air of song shall
breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that
make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly
drown
The bases of my life in tears.

L.

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the
nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer
trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering
dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting
and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

L.I.

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?

Is there no baseness we would
hide?

No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his
blame,
See with clear eye some hidden
shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
Shall love be blamed for want of
faith?
There must be wisdom with great
Death:

The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling
hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

L.II

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing be-
loved;
My words are only words, and
moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

" Yet blame not thou my plaintive
song,"
The Spirit of true love replied;
" Thou canst not move me from
thy side,

Nor human frailty do me wrong.

" What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless
years

That breathed beneath the Syrian
blue:

" So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of
sin.

Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath sunder'd shell from
pearl."

LIII.

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish
noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and
green :

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been
sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had
grown
The grain by which a man may live ?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a
truth
To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good : define it well :
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark,
and be
Procures to the Lords of Hell.

LIV.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be de-
stroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile com-
plete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall
fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry.

LV.

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil
dreams ?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of
cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and
groe,
And gather dust and chaff, and
call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI.

"So careful of the type ?" but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried
stone
She cries, " A thousand types are
gone :

I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me :
I bring to life, I bring to death :
The spirit does but mean the
breath :
I knew no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so
fair,

Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry
skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless
prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and
claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his
creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the
Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the
prime,
That tare each other in their
slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !
O for thy voice to soothe and
bless !
What hope of answer, or redress ?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII.

Peace ; come away : the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song :
Peace ; come away : we do him
wrong
To sing so wildly : let us go.

Come ; let us go : your cheeks are
pale ;
But half my life I leave behind :
Methinks my friend is richly
shrin'd ;
But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead ;
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
"Adieu, adieu" for evermore.

LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell :
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to
day,
Half-conscious of their dying
clay,
And those cold crypts where they
shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd : " Wherefore
grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless
tear ?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LIX.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of
life ;
As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day ;
But I'll have leave at times to
play
As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to
come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were
thine.

LX.

He past ; a soul of nobler tone :
 My spirit loved and loves him yet,
 Like some poor girl whose heart is set
 On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
 She finds the baseness of her lot,
 Half jealous of she knows not what,
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;
 She sighs amid her narrow days,
 Moving about the household ways,
 In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
 And tease her till the day draws by :
 At night she weeps, " How vain am I !"
 How should he love a thing so low ? "

LXI.

If, in thy second state sublime,
 Thy ransom'd reason change replies
 With all the circle of the wise,
 The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
 How dimly character'd and slight,
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,
 How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
 Where thy first form was made a man ;
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
 The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
 Then be my love an idle tale,
 And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than boy,
 On some unworthy heart with joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies,
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
 Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
 And love in which my hound has part,
 Can hang no weight upon my heart
 In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,
 As thou, perchance, art more than I,
 And yet I spare them sympathy,
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
 As, unto vaster motions bound,
 The circuits of thine orbit round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
 And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
 And breasts the blows of circumstance,
 And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden
keys,

To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning
slope

The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are
still,

A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands;
"Does my old friend remember me?"

LXV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With "Love's too precious to be
lost,

A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI.

You thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is
free,
Who takes the children on his
knee,

And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his
chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky,
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight
dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a
ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVIII.

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times
my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows
not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd-forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with
dew,

And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillee to the breaking morn.

But what is this ? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not
why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth ;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX.

I dream'd there would be Spring no
more,
That Nature's ancient power was
lost.
The streets were black with smoke
and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny
boughs :
I took the thorns to bind my
brows,
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary
hairs :
They call'd me in the public
squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me
child :
I found an angel of the night ;
The voice was low, the look was
bright ;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :
The voice was not the voice of
grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXXX.

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to
paint
The face I know; the hues are
faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons
wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and pallid
shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawn-
ing doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces
drive ;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and
trance
And madness, thou hast forged
at last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer
France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?
Then bring an opiate trebly
strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of
wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of
change,
The days that grow to something
strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXIII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down
thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath:
I curse not nature, no, nor death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXXV.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
 In verse that brings myself relief,
 And by the measure of my grief
 I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoe'er expert
 In fitting aptest words to things,
 Or voice the richest-toned that
 sings,
 Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
 To raise a cry that lasts not long,
 And round thee with the breeze
 of song
 To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
 And, while we breathe beneath the
 sun,
 The world which credits what is
 done
 Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
 But somewhere, out of human
 view,
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
 And in a moment set thy face
 Where all the starry heavens of
 space
 Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
 The secular abyss to come.
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
 Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
 The darkness of our planet, last,
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy
 bowers
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are
 vain;

And what are they when these
 remain
 The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

LXXXVII.

What hope is here for modern rhyme
 To him, who turns a musing eye
 On songs, and deeds, and lives,
 that lie
 Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
 May bind a book, may line a box,
 May serve to curl a maiden's
 locks;
 Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
 And, passing, turn the page that
 tells
 A grief, then changed to some-
 thing else,
 Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways
 Shall ring with music all the same;
 To breathe my loss is more than
 fame,
 To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXXVIII.

Again at Christmas did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas
 hearth;
 The silent snow possess'd the
 earth,
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-eleg sparkled keen with frost,
 No wing of wind the region swept,
 But over all things brooding slept
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
 Again our ancient games had
 place,
 The mimic picture's breathing
 grace,
 And dance and song and hoodman-
 blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ?
No single tear, no mark of pain :
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?
O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can die !
No — mixt with all this mystic
frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXXIX.

" More than my brothers are to me,"—
Let this not vex thee, noble heart !
I know thee of what force thou
art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did
print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves ; the
same
All winds that roam the twilight
came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we
learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet
turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his
side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy ean,
The grief my loss in him had
wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought.
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;
I hear the sentence that he speaks ;
He bears the burthen of the weeks
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;
And, influence-rich to soothe and
save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI.

Could I have said while he was here,
" My love shall now no further
range ;
There cannot come a mellower
change,
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store :
What end is here to my com-
plaint ?
This haunting whisper makes me
faint,
" More years had made me love thee
more."

But Death returns an answer sweet :
" My sudden frost was sudden
gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain,
It might have drawn from after-heat."

LXXXII.

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and
face ;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him, can fright my
faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit
walks ;

And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth :
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart ;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long ;
Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place ?

Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown ;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp
and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou should'st link thy life
with one

Of mine own house, and boys of thine
Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee ;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant ?
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore
 wake
 The old bitterness again, and
 break
 The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV.

This truth came borne with bier and
 pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,
 Demanding so to bring relief
 To this which is our common
 grief,

What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;
 And whether love for him have
 drain'd

My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws
 A faithful answer from the
 breast,
 Thro' light reproaches, half ex-
 prest,

And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message
 falls,
 That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal
 state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome
 there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
 And show'd him in the fountain
 fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of
 flesh
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were
 little worth,
 To wander on a darken'd earth,
 Where all things round me breathed
 of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion
 warm,
 O sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,
 How much of act at human hands
 The sense of human will demands
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
 The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
 With gifts of grace, that might
 express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilizing intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual
 strife,
 Diffused the shock thro' all my
 life,
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I met ;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch ;
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears :
The all-assuming months and
years
Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
And Autumn, with a noise of
rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or
gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to
speak:
"Arise, and get thee forth and
seek
A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human
speech
We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free ?
How is it ? Canst thou feel for
me
Some painless sympathy with pain ? "

And lightly does the whisper fall ;
"Tis hard for thee to fathom
this ;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead ;
Or so methinks the dead would
say ;
Or so shall grief with symbols
play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall
prove
A meeting somewhere, love with
love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours ?
First love, first friendship, equal
powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous
gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned
flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy
breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt
and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odor streaming far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

LXXXVII.

I past beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the gown;
 I roved at random thro' the town,
 And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
 The storm their high-built organs
 make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
 The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant
 shout,
 The measured pulse of racing
 oars
 Among the willows; paced the
 shores

And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same; and
 last

Up that long walk of limes I past
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:
 I linger'd; all within was noise
 Of songs, and clapping hands,
 and boys
 That crash'd the glass and beat the
 floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
 Of youthful friends, on mind and
 art,
 And labor, and the changing mart,
 And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
 But send it slackly from the
 string;
 And one would pierce an outer
 ring,
 And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
 Would cleave the mark. A wil-
 ling ear
 We lent him. Who, but hung to
 hear
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and
 grace
 And music in the bounds of law,
 To those conclusions when we
 saw

The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
 And over those ethereal eyes
 The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVIII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
 Rings Eden thro' the budded
 quicks,
 O tell me where the senses mix,
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes em-
 ploy
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
 And in the midmost heart of
 grief
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I — my harp would prelude
 woe —
 I cannot all command the strings;
 The glory of the sum of things
 Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX.

Witch-elms' that counterchange the
 floor
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and
 bright;
 And thou, with all thy breadth
 and height
 Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
 My Arthur found your shadows
 fair,

And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixt in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from
brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat;

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning
dew,
The gust that round the garden
flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing
pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and
flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the lifelong summer
day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to
theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or
hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the
state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For "ground in yonder social
mill
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge" he said "in form and
gloss
The picturesque of man and
man."
We talk'd: the stream beneath
us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-eireled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine
veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

xc.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate
spring
Where nighest heaven, who first
could fling
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying
eyes
Were closed with wail, resume
their life,
They would but find in child and
wife
An iron welcome when they rise:

Twas well, indeed, when warm with
wine,
To pledge them with a kindly
tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them
here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other
hands;
The hard heir strides about their
lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of
these,

Not less the yet-loved sire would
make
Confusion worse than death, and
shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :
Whatever change the years have
wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

xcii.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted
thrush ;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;
Come, wear the form by which I
know
Thy spirit in time among thy
peers ;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing
change
May breathe, with many roses
sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of
wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange ;
Come : not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth
warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after
form,
And like a finer light in light.

xciii.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it
vain
As but the canker of the brain ;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year ;
And tho' the months, revolving
near,
Should prove the phantom-warning
true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

xciii.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native
land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in
clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may
come
Where all the nerve of sense is
numb ;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to
name ;
That in this blindness of the
frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

xciv.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought
would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst
say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

xcv.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry ;
And genial warmth ; and o'er the
sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy
shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine
capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that
peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where,
couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and
the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me
and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
Of that glad year which once had
been,
In those fall'n leaves which kept
their green,
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and
strange
Was love's dumb cry defying
change
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward
back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to
track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from
the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and
whirl'd
About empyreal heights of
thought,
And came on that which is, and
caught

The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time — the shocks
of Chance —

The blows of Death. At length
my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with
doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to
frame
In matter-moulded forms of
speech,

Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where,
couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and
the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms,
and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn," and died
away;
And East and West, without a
breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life
and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-
blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplex'd in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest
doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd
strength,
He would not make his judgment
blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the
night,
Which makes the darkness and
the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of
gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII.

My love has talk'd with rocks and
trees;
He finds on misty mountain-
ground
His own vast shadow glory-
crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
I look'd on these and thought of
thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on
eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in
tune,
Their meetings made December
June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and
deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss:
She knows not what his great-
ness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the
house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
"I cannot understand : I love."

xcviii.

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him ; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That City. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings :
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

xcix.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swell'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurrest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls ;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

c.

I climb the hill : from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the
hill

And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy
curves,

That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CL.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall
sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather
brown,

This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk
of seed,

And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the
plain,

At noon or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of fern and
erake;

Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape
grow

Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the
glades;

And year by year our memory
fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CII.

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the
sky;
The roofs, that heard our earliest
cry,
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I
move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood
sung
Long since its matin song, and
heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here
Thy feet have stray'd in after
hours
With thy lost friend among the
bowers,
And this hath made them trebly
dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate
claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and
farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII.

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was
bred,
I dream'd a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me : distant
hills
From hidden summits fed with
rills

A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and
good

And graceful. In the centre
stood

A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to
me,
The shape of him I loved, and
love

For ever : then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the
sea :

And when they learnt that I must go
They wept and wail'd, but led the
way

To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made
the banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore
And roll'd the floods in grander
space,
The maidens gather'd strength
and grace

And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, wax'd in every
limb ;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to
be,
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we
saw

A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewail'd their lot ; I did them
wrong :

" We served thee here," they said,
" so long,

And wilt thou leave us now behind ? "

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, " Enter likewise ye
And go with us :" they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steer'd her toward a crimson
cloud

That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV.

The time draws near the birth of
Christ ;
The moon is hid, the night is still ;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory
strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other
days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV.

To-night ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand :
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows :
There in due time the woodbine
blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and
mime ;
For change of place, like growth
of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly
proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;
For who would keep an ancient
form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no
more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be
blown ;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the
seed ;
Run out your measured arcs, and
lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light :
The year is dying in the night ;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the
snow :
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no
more ;
Ring out the feud of rich and
poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife ;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the
times ;
Ring out, ring out my mournful
rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and
blood,
The civic slander and the spite ;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
Ring out the narrowing lust of
gold ;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier
hand ;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII.

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely
flies
The blast of North and East, and
ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,
And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs

Above the wood which grides and
elangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch
the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII.

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with
might
To scale the heaven's highest
height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting
hymns?
And on the depths of death there
swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
"Tis held that sorrow makes us
wise,

Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never
dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of
man;
Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic
gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy
heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would
twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine
eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd
in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of ratioc and riper years:
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of
pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thouwert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen
fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;
While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;

And loved them more, that they
were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;
Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not
tire,
And, born of love, the vague
desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's
sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale:

For who can always act ? but he,
To whom a thousand memories
call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and
join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate
eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel
power
Sprang up for ever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too
much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest
made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps
with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —
I doubt not what thou wouldest have
been :

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has
birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and
go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with
cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge ? Who
shall rail

Against her beauty ? May she
mix
With men and prosper ! Who
shall fix
Her pillars ? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and
faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons ? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her
place ;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain ; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O, friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and
hour
In reverence and in charity.

cxv.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of
quick
About the flowering squares, and
thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dancee the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the
vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change
their sky
To build and brood ; that live their
lives

From land to land ; and in my breast
Spring wakens too ; and my re-
gret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

cxvi.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April
wakes,
And meets the year, and gives
and takes
The colors of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten
trust

In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone ;
And that dear voice, I once have
known,

Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune
dead ;
Less yearning for the friendship
fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be.

cxvii.

O days and hours, your work is this
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that
steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and
truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random
forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic
storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who threw and branch'd from clime
to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course,
and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning
fears,
And dip't in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual
feast;

Move upward, working out the
beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXXIX.

Doors, where my heart was used to
beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-
withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of
thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce
a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with
Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and
then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood
shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXXXI.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever
dim
And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is
heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the
 brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer
clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my
past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the
same.

cxxxii.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearn'd to burst the folded
gloom,
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flush of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Faney blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply
glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

cxxxiii.

There rolls the deep where grew the
tree.

O earth, what changes hast thou
seen!

There where the long street roars,
hath been

The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing
stands;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves
and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold
it true;
Fortho' my lips may breathadieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

cxxxiv.

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest
doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we
guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may
try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice "believe no more"
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would
melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the
heart

Stood up and answer'd "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind claimor made me
wise;

Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;
. And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands ;
And out of darkness came the
hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding
men.

CXXV.

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would
give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to
live

A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;
She did but look through dimmer
eyes ;
Or Love but play'd with gracious
lies,

Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of eare,
He breathed the spirit of the song ;
And if the words were sweet and
strong

He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI.

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and
sleep

Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to
place,

And whispers to the worlds of
space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII.

And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;
Well roars the storm to those that
hear

A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazari, in his rags :
They tremble, the sustaining
crags ;

The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the
sky,

And the great Aeon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;
While thou, dear spirit, happy
star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with
Death,

Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade ;
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and
Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like
new ;
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,

To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesques
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal;
I loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst
not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeper, darker understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature
thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI.

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer
shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them
pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be
proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he
loved
A daughter of our house; nor
proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years: they went
and came,
Remade the blood and changed
the fame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are
flown,

For I myself with these have
grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I
made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere
noon?

She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy
look
And brighten like the star that
shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she
grows
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that
weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee
beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's
arm,
That shielded all her life from
harm
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her
head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The "wilt thou" answer'd, and
again
The "wilt thou" ask'd, till out of
twain
Her sweet "I will" has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be
read,

Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn;
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering
breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the
trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them — maidens of the
place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I
gave.
They leave the porch, they pass
the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life in-
creased,
Who stay to share the morning
feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not
shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces
bloom,
As drinking health to bride and
groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the
rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favor'd horses
wait;
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what he
said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought,
the wealth
Of words and wit, the double
health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-
three,

And last the dance;— till I retire:
Dumb is that tower which spake
so loud,
And high in heaven the stream-
ing cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing
rills,

And catch at every mountain
head,
And o'er the friths that branch
and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the
wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the
vast

And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose com-
mand
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their
hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and
did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but
seed

Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

QUEEN MARY:

A DRAMA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

QUEEN MARY.

PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain.*

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*

SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*

LE SIEUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*

THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*

EDWARD COURtenay, *Earl of Devon.*

LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*

LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME. LORD PAGET. LORD PETRE.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*

EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.* THOMAS THIRLBY, *Bishop of Ely.*

SIR THOMAS WYATT } *Insurrectionary Leaders.*

SIR THOMAS STAFFORD }
SIR RALPH BAGENHALL. SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD. SIR WILLIAM CECIL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*

THE DUKE OF ALVA }
THE COUNT DE FERIA } *attending on Philip.*

PETER MARTYR. FATHER COLE. FATHER BOURNE.

VILLA GARCIA. SOTO.

CAPTAIN BRETT }
ANTHONY KNIVETT } *Adherents of Wyatt.*

PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*

ROGER, *Servant to Noailles.* WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*

STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD to the Princess Elizabeth.

OLD NOKES and NOKES.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*

LADY CLARENCE }
LADY MAGDALEN DACRES } *Ladies in Waiting to the Queen.*

Alice.

MAID OF HONOR to the Princess Elizabeth.

JOAN }
TIB } *two Country Wives.*

Lords and other Attendants, Members of the Privy Council, Members of Parliament, Two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards, Pages, Gospellers, Marshalmen, etc.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—ALDGATE RICHLY DECORATED.

CROWD. MARSHALMEN.

Marshalman. Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, sayst thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads and your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knaves!

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary!

First Citizen. That's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

Second Citizen. It means a bastard.

Third Citizen. Nay, it means true-born.

First Citizen. Why, didn't the Parliament make her a bastard?

Second Citizen. No; it was the Lady Elizabeth.

Third Citizen. That was after, man; that was after.

First Citizen. Then which is the bastard?

Second Citizen. Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

Third Citizen. Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it make thee a bastard? thou shouldest know, for thou art as white as three Christmasses.

Old Nokes (dreamily). Who's-a-passing? King Edward or King Richard?

Third Citizen. No, old Nokes.

Old Nokes. It's Harry!

Third Citizen. It's Queen Mary.

Old Nokes. The blessed Mary's a-passing! [Falls on his knees.]

Nokes. Let father alone, my masters! he's past your questioning.

Third Citizen. Answer thou for him, then! thou'rt no such cockerel

thyself, for thou was born i' the tail end of old Harry the Seventh.

Nokes. Eh! that was afore bastard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard.

Third Citizen. But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at the elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels.

Nokes. I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

Marshalman. What are you cackling of bastardly under the Queen's own nose? I'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the Rood I will.

First Citizen. He swears by the Rood. Whew!

Second Citizen. Hark! the trumpets.

[*The Procession passes, Mary and Elizabeth riding side by side, and disappears under the gate.*

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland!

[*Exeunt.*

Manent Two GENTLEMEN.

First Gentleman. By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

Second Gentleman. She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal.

First Gentleman. I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughter in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following.

Second Gentleman. Ay, that was in

her hour of joy; there will be plenty to sunder and unsister them again: this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer.

First Gentleman. And furthermore, my daughter said that when there rose a talk of the late rebellion, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy.

Second Gentleman. Well, sir, I look for happy times.

First Gentleman. There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

Second Gentleman. I suppose you touch upon the rumor that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the Devil. I trust it is but a rumor.

First Gentleman. She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid feature, whom the council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it.

Second Gentleman. Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself?

First Gentleman. Ay, but he's too old.

Second Gentleman. And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day.

First Gentleman. O, the Pope could dispense with his Cardinalate, and his achage, and his breakage, if that were all: will you not follow the procession?

Second Gentleman. No; I have seen enough for this day.

First Gentleman. Well, I shall fol-

low; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A ROOM IN LAMBETH PALACE.

Cranmer. To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle—our Bishops from their sees
Or fled, they say, or flying—Poinet,
Barlow,
Bale, Scory, Coverdale; besides the
Deans
Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter, and
Wells—
Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds
more;
So they report: I shall be left alone.
No: Hooper, Ridley, Latimer will not
fly.

Enter PETER MARTYR.

Peter Martyr. Fly, Cranmer! were
there nothing else, your name
Stands first of those who sign'd the
Letters Patent
That gave her royal crown to Lady
Jane.

Cranmer. Stand first it may, but it
was written last:
Those that are now her Privy Council,
sign'd
Before me: nay, the Judges had pro-
nounced
That our young Edward might be-
queath the crown
Of England, putting by his father's
will.
Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for
me.
The wan boy-king, with his fast-fading
eyes
Fixt hard on mine, his frail transpar-
ent hand,
Damp with the sweat of death, and
griping mine,
Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to
yield

His Church of England to the Papal
wolf
And Mary ; then I could no more —
I sign'd.
Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency,
She cannot pass her traitor council by,
To make me headless.

Peter Martyr. That might be forgiven.
I tell you, fly, my Lord. You do not own

The bodily presence in the Eucharist,
Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice :
Your creed will be your death.

Cranmer. Step after step,
Thro' many voices crying right and left,
Have I climb'd back into the primal church,
And stand within the porch, and Christ with me :
My flight were such a scandal to the faith,

The downfall of so many simple souls,
I dare not leave my post.

Peter Martyr. But you divorced Queen Catharine and her father ; hence, her hate

Will burn till you are burn'd.

Cranmer. I cannot help it. The Canonists and Schoolmen were with me.

"Thou shalt not wed thy brother's wife." — "Tis written,

"They shall be childless." True, Mary was born, But France would not accept her for a bride

As being born from incest ; and this wrought

Upon the king ; and child by child, you know,

Were momentary sparkles out as quick

Almost as kindled ; and he brought his doubts

And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear for him

He did believe the bond incestuous. But wherefore am I trenching on the time

That should already have seen your steps a mile From me and Lambeth ? God be with you ! Go.

Peter Martyr. Ah, but how fierce a letter you wrote against Their superstition when they slander'd you

For setting up a mass at Canterbury To please the Queen.

Cranmer. It was a wheedling monk Set up the mass.

Peter Martyr. I know it, my good Lord. But you so bubbled over with hot terms Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Anti-christ, She never will forgive you. Fly, my Lord, fly !

Cranmer. I wrote it, and God grant me power to burn !

Peter Martyr. They have given me a safe conduct : for all that I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see you,

Dear friend, for the last time ; farewell, and fly.

Cranmer. Fly and farewell, and let me die the death.

[Exit Peter Martyr.

Enter OLD SERVANT.

O, kind and gentle master, the Queen's Officers Are here in force to take you to the Tower.

Cranmer. Ay, gentle friend, admit them. I will go. I thank my God it is too late to fly.

[Exit.

SCENE III.—St. PAUL'S CROSS.

FATHER BOURNE in the pulpit. A crowd. MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, COURtenay. The SIEUR DE NOAILLES and his man ROGER in front of the stage. Hubbub.

Noailles. Hast thou let fall those papers in the palace ?

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. "There will be no peace for Mary till Elizabeth lose her head."

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. And the other, "Long live Elizabeth the Queen!"

Roger. Ay, sir; she needs must tread upon them.

Noailles. Well.

These beastly swine make such a grunting here,

I cannot catch what Father Bourne is saying.

Roger. Quiet a moment, my masters; hear what the shaveling has to say for himself.

Crowd. Hush — hear!

Bourne. — and so this unhappy land, long divided in itself, and sever'd from the faith, will return into the one true fold, seeing that our gracious Virgin Queen hath —

Crowd. No pope! no pope!

Roger (to those about him, mimicking Bourne). — hath sent for the holy legate of the holy father the Pope, Cardinal Pole, to give us all that holy absolution which —

First Citizen. Old Bourne to the life!

Second Citizen. Holy absolution! holy Inquisition!

Third Citizen. Down with the Papist!

[*Hubbub.*]

Bourne. — and now that your good bishop, Bonner, who hath lain so long under bonds for the faith — [*Hubbub.*]

Noailles. Friend Roger, steal thou in among the crowd,

And get the swine to shout Elizabeth. Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as mid-winter,

Begin with him.

Roger (goes). By the mass, old friend, we'll have no pope here while the Lady Elizabeth lives.

Gospeller. Art thou of the true faith, fellow, that swearst by the mass?

Roger. Ay, that am I, new converted, but the old leaven sticks to my tongue yet.

First Citizen. He says right; by the mass we'll have no mass here.

Voices of the crowd. Peace! hear him; let his own words damn the Papist. From thine own mouth I judge thee — tear him down!

Bourne. — and since our Gracious Queen, let me call her our second Virgin Mary, hath begun to re-ify the true temple —

First Citizen. Virgin Mary! we'll have no virgins here — we'll have the Lady Elizabeth!

[*Swords are drawn, a knife is hurled and sticks in the pulpit. The mob throng to the pulpit stairs.*]

Marchioness of Exeter. Son Courtenay, wilt thou see the holy father

Murdered before thy face? up, son, and save him!

They love thee, and thou canst not come to harm.

Courtenay (in the pulpit). Shame, shame, my masters! are you English-born, And set yourselves by hundreds against one?

Crowd. A Courtenay! a Courtenay!

[*A train of Spanish servants crosses at the back of the stage.*]

Noailles. These birds of passage come before their time: Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there.

Roger. My masters, yonder's fatter game for you Than this old gaping gargoyle: look you there —

The prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen!

After him, boys! and pelt him from the city.

[*They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side Marchioness of Exeter and Attendants.*]

Noailles (to Roger). Stand from me. If Elizabeth lose her head — That makes for France.

And if her people, anger'd thereupon,
Arise against her and dethrone the
Queen —

That makes for France.

And if I breed confusion anyway —
That makes for France.

Good-day, my Lord of Devon;
A bold heart yours to beard that rag-
ing mob!

Courtenay. My mother said, Go up;
and up I went.

I knew they would not do me any
wrong,
For I am mighty popular with them,
Noailles.

Noailles. You look'd a king.

Courtenay. Why not? I am
king's blood.

Noailles. And in the whirl of change
may come to be one.

Courtenay. Ah!

Noailles. But does your gracious
Queen entreat you kinglike?

Courtenay. 'Fore God, I think she
entreats me like a child.

Noailles. You've but a dull life in
this maiden court,

I fear, my Lord?

Courtenay. A life of nods and yawns.

Noailles. So you would honor my
poor house to-night,
We might enliven you. Divers honest
fellows,

The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from
prison.

Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas
Wyatt,

Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more
— we play.

Courtenay. At what?

Noailles. The Game of Chess.

Courtenay. The Game of Chess!
I can play well, and I shall beat you
there.

Noailles. Ay, but we play with
Henry, King of France,
And certain of his court.
His Highness makes his moves across
the Channel,
We answer him with ours, and there
are messengers
That go between us.

Courtenay. Why, such a game, sir,
were whole years a playing.

Noailles. Nay; not so long I trust.
That all depends

Upon the skill and swiftness of the
players.

Courtenay. The King is skilful at it?

Noailles. Very, my Lord.

Courtenay. And the stakes high?

Noailles. But not beyond your
means.

Courtenay. Well, I'm the first of
players. I shall win.

Noailles. With our advice and in
our company,

And so you well attend to the king's
moves,

I think you may.

Courtenay. When do you meet?

Noailles. To-night.

Courtenay. (aside). I will be there;
the fellow's at his tricks —

Deep — I shall fathom him. (Aloud.)
Good morning, Noailles.

[Exit Courtenay.

Noailles. Good-day, my Lord.
Strange game of chess! a King
That with her own pawns plays against
a Queen,

Whose play is all to find herself a
King.

Ay; but this fine blue-blooded Courte-
nay seems

Too princely for a pawn. Call him a
Knight,

That, with an ass's, not a horse's head,
Skips every way, from levity or from
fear.

Well, we shall use him somehow, so
that Gardiner

And Simon Renard spy not out our
game

Too early. Roger, thinkest thou that
anyone

Suspected thee to be my man?

Roger. Not one, sir.

Noailles. No! the disguise was per-
fect. Let's away. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

ELIZABETH. Enter COURtenay.

Courtenay. So yet am I,
Unless my friends and mirrors lie to
me,
A goodlier-looking fellow than this
Philip.

Pah !
The Queen is ill advised : shall I turn
traitor ?
They've almost talked me into it : yet
the word
Affrights me somewhat : to be such a
one
As Harry Bolingbroke hath a lure in
it.
Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by
your age,
And by your looks you are not worth
the having,
Yet by your crown you are.

[Seeing Elizabeth.]

The Princess there ?
If I tried her and la — she's amor-
ous.
Have we not heard of her in Edward's
time,
Her freaks and frolics with the late
Lord Admiral ?
I do believe she'd yield. I should be
still
A party in the state ; and then, who
knows —

Elizabeth. What are you musing on,
my Lord of Devon ?

Courtenay. Has not the Queen —

Elizabeth. Done what, Sir ?

Courtenay. — made you follow
The Lady Suffolk and the Lady Len-
nox ? —

You,
The heir presumptive.

Elizabeth. Why do you ask ? you
know it.

Courtenay. You needs must bear it
hardly.

Elizabeth. No, indeed !
I am utterly submissive to the Queen.

Courtenay. Well, I was musing up-
on that ; the Queen
Is both my foe and yours : we should
be friends.

Elizabeth. My Lord, the hatred of
another to us
Is no true bond of friendship.

Courtenay. Might it not
Be the rough preface of some closer
bond ?

Elizabeth. My Lord, you late were
loosed from out the Tower,
Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis,
You spent your life ; that broken, out
you flutter
Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now
would settle
Upon this flower, now that ; but all
things here
At court are known ; you have solicited
The Queen, and been rejected.

Courtenay. Flower, she !
Half faded ! but you, cousin, are fresh
and sweet
As the first flower no bee has ever
tried.

Elizabeth. Are you the bee to try
me ? why, but now
I called you butterfly.

Courtenay. You did me wrong,
I love not to be called a butterfly :
Why do you call me butterfly ?

Elizabeth. Why do you go so gay
then ?

Courtenay. Velvet and gold.
This dress was made me as the Earl
of Devon
To take my seat in ; looks it not right
royal ?

Elizabeth. So royal that the Queen
forbad you wearing it.

Courtenay. I wear it then to spite
her.

Elizabeth. My Lord, my Lord ;
I see you in the Tower again. Her
Majesty

Hears you afflict the Prince — prelates
kneel to you. —

Courtenay. I am the noblest blood
in Europe, Madam,
A Courtenay of Devon, and her
cousin.

Elizabeth. She hears you make
your boast that after all
She means to wed you. Folly, my
good Lord.

Courtenay. How folly? a great
party in the state
Wills me to wed her.

Elizabeth. Failing her, my Lord,
Doth not as great a party in the
state
Will you to wed me?

Courtenay. Even so, fair lady.
Elizabeth. You know to flatter
ladies.

Courtenay. Nay, I meant
True matters of the heart.

Elizabeth. My heart, my Lord,
Is no great party in the state as yet.

Courtenay. Great, said you? nay,
you shall be great. I love you,
Lay my life in your hands. Can you
be close?

Elizabeth. Can you, my Lord?
Courtenay. Close as a miser's casket.

Listen:
The King of France, Noailles the
Ambassador,
The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter
Carew,
Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some
others,
Have sworn this Spanish marriage
shall not be.
If Mary will not hear us—well—
conjecture—
Were I in Devon with my wedded
bride,
The people there so worship me—
Your ear;
You shall be Queen.

Elizabeth. You speak too low,
my Lord;
I cannot hear you.

Courtenay. I'll repeat it.
Elizabeth. No!
Stand further off, or you may lose
your head.

Courtenay. I have a head to lose
for your sweet sake.

Elizabeth. Have you, my Lord?
Best keep it for your own.
Nay, pout not, cousin.

Not many friends are mine, except
indeed
Among the many, I believe you
mine;
And so you may continue mine, fare-
well,
And that at once.

Enter MARY, behind.

Mary. Whispering — leagued to-
gether
To bar me from my Philip.

Courtenay. Pray — consider —
Elizabeth (seeing the Queen). Well,
that's a noble horse of yours,
my Lord.

I trust that he will carry you well
to-day,
And heal your headache.

Courtenay. You are wild; what
headache?

Heartache, perchance; not headache.
Elizabeth (aside to Courtenay). Are
you blind?

[Courtenay sees the Queen and exit.
Exit Mary.

Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Was that my Lord of
Devon? do not you
Be seen in corners with my Lord of
Devon.
He hath fallen out of favor with the
Queen.

She fears the Lords may side with
you and him
Against her marriage; therefore is he
dangerous.

And if this Prince of fluff and feather
come
To woo you, niece, he is dangerous
everyway.

Elizabeth. Not very dangerous that
way, my good uncle.

Howard. But your own state is full
of danger here.
The disaffected, heretics, reformers,
Look to you as the one to crown their
ends.

Mix not yourself with any plot I pray
you;

Nay, if by chance you hear of any such,
Speak not thereof — no, not to your
best friend,
Lest you should be confounded with
it. Still —

Perinde ac cadaver — as the priest
says,
You know your Latin — quiet as a
dead body.
What was my Lord of Devon telling
you?

Elizabeth. Whether he told me any-
thing or not,
I follow your good counsel, gracious
uncle.

Quiet as a dead body.

Howard. You do right well.
I do not care to know; but this I
charge you,
Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord
Chancellor
(I count it as a kind of virtue in him,
He hath not many), as a mastiff dog
May love a puppy cur for no more
reason

Than that the twain have been tied
up together,
Thus Gardiner — for the two were
fellow-prisoners
So many years in yon accursed
Tower —
Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look
to it, niece,
He hath no fence when Gardiner
questions him;
All oozes out; yet him — because
they know him
The last White Rose, the last Plantagenet
(Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too), the
people
Claim as their natural leader — ay,
some say,

That you shall marry him, make him
King belike.

Elizabeth. Do they say so, good
uncle?

Howard. Ay, good niece!
You should be plain and open with
me, niece.

You should not play upon me.

Elizabeth. No, good uncle.

Enter GARDINER.

Gardiner. The Queen would see
your Grace upon the moment.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord Bishop?

Gardiner. I think she means to
counsel your withdrawing
To Ashridge, or some other country
house.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord Bishop?

Gardiner. I do but bring the mes-
sage, know no more.
Your Grace will hear her reasons
from herself.

Elizabeth. 'Tis mine own wish ful-
fill'd before the word
Was spoken, for in truth I had meant
to crave
Permission of her Highness to retire
To Ashridge, and pursue my studies
there.

Gardiner. Madam, to have the wish
before the word
Is man's good Fairy — and the Queen
is yours.

I left her with rich jewels in her hand,
Whereof 'tis like enough she means
to make

A farewell present to your Grace.

Elizabeth. My Lord,
I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

Gardiner. I doubt it not, Madam,
most loyal. [Bows low and exit.

Howard. See,
This comes of parleying with my Lord
of Devon.

Well, well, you must obey; and I my-
self

Believe it will be better for your wel-
fare.

Your time will come.

Elizabeth. I think my time will
come.

Uncle,
I am of sovereign nature, that I know,
Not to be quell'd; and I have felt
within me

Stirrings of some great doom when
God's just hour

Peals — but this fierce old Gardiner
— his big baldness,
That irritable forelock which he rubs,

His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd
eyes
Half fright me.

Howard. You've a bold heart; keep
it so.
He cannot touch you save that you
turn traitor;
And so take heed I pray you — you
are one
Who love that men should smile up-
on you, niece.
They'd smile you into treason — some
of them.

Elizabeth. I spy the rock beneath
the smiling sea.
But if this Philip, the proud Catholic
prince,
And this bald priest, and she that
hates me, seek
In that lone house, to practise on my
life,
By poison, fire, shot, stab —

Howard. They will not, niece.
Mine is the fleet and all the power at
sea —
Or will be in a moment. If they dared
To harm you, I would blow this Philip
and all

Your trouble to the dogstar and the
devil.

Elizabeth. To the Pleiads, uncle;
they have lost a sister.
Howard. But why say that? what
have you done to lose her?
Come, come, I will go with you to the
Queen. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

MARY with PHILIP's miniature. ALICE.

Mary (*kissing the miniature*). Most
goodly, Kinglike and an Em-
peror's son, —

A king to be, — is he not noble, girl?
Alice. Goodly enough, your Grace,
and yet, methinks,

I have seen goodlier.

Mary. Ay; some waxen doll

Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike;
All red and white, the fashion of our
land.

But my good mother came (God rest
her soul)
Of Spain, and I am Spanish in myself,
And in my likings.

Alice. By your Grace's leave
Your royal mother came of Spain,
but took
To the English red and white. Your
royal father
(For so they say) was all pure lily and
rose

In his youth, and like a lady.

Mary. O, just God!
Sweet mother, you had time and cause
enough
To sicken of his lilies and his roses.
Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced,
forlorn!

And then the King — that traitor past
forgiveness,
The false archbishop fawning on him,
married
The mother of Elizabeth — a heretic
Ev'n as she is; but God hath sent me
here

To take such order with all heretics
That it shall be, before I die, as tho'
My father and my brother had not
lived.

What wast thou saying of this Lady
Jane

Now in the Tower?

Alice. Why, Madam, she was pass-
ing
Some chapel down in Essex, and with
her
Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady
Anne
Bow'd to the Pyx; but Lady Jane
stood up
Stiff as the very backbone of heresy.
And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady
Anne,

To him within there who made Heav-
en and Earth?
I cannot, and I dare not, tell your
Grace

What Lady Jane replied.

Mary. But I will have it

Alice. She said—pray pardon me,
and pity her—

She hath hearken'd evil counsel—ah!
she said,

The baker made him.

Mary. Monstrous! blasphemous!
She ought to burn. Hence, thou (*Exit Alice*). No—being traitor
Her head will fall: shall it? she is
but a child.

We do not kill the child for doing that
His father whipt him into doing—a
head

So full of grace and beauty! would
that mine

Were half as gracious! O, my lord
to be,

My love, for thy sake only.

I am eleven years older than he is.

But will he care for that?

No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,
But love me only: then the bastard
sprout,

My sister, is far fairer than myself.

Will he be drawn to her?

No, being of the true faith with myself.

Paget is for him—for to wed with
Spain

Would treble England—Gardiner is
against him;

The Council, people, Parliament
against him;

But I will have him! My hard fa-
ther hated me;

My brother rather hated me than
loved;

My sister cowers and hates me. Holy
Virgin,

Plead with thy blessed Son; grant
me my prayer:

Give me my Philip; and we two will
lead

The living waters of the Faith again
Back thro' their widow'd channel

here, and watch

The parch'd banks rolling incense, as
of old,

To heaven, and kindled with the
palms of Christ!

Enter USHER.

Who waits, sir?

Usher. Madam, the Lord Chan-
cellor.

Mary. Bid him come in. (*Enter*

GARDINER.) Good morning,

my good Lord. [*Exit Usher.*

Gardiner. That every morning of

your Majesty

May be most good, is every morning's

prayer

Of your most loyal subject, Stephen

Gardiner.

Mary. Come you to tell me this,

my Lord?

Gardiner. And more.

Your people have begun to learn your

worth.

Your pious wisi to pay King Ed-
ward's debts,

Your lavish household curb'd, and the
remission

Of half that subsidy levied on the
people,

Make all tongues praise and all hearts
beat for you.

I'd have you yet more loved: the
realm is poor,

The exchequer at neap-tide: we might
withdraw

Part of our garrison at Calais.

Mary. Calais!

Our one point on the main, the gate
of France!

I am Queen of England; take mine
eyes, mine heart,

But do not lose me Calais.

Gardiner. Do not fear it.
Of that hereafter. I say your Grace

is loved.

That I may keep you thus, who am
your friend

And ever faithful counsellor, might I
speak?

Mary. I can forespeak your speak-
ing. Would I marry

Prince Philip, if all England hate
him? That is

Your question, and I front it with an-
other:

Is it England, or a party? Now, your
answer.

Gardiner. My answer is, I wear be-
neath my dress.

A shirt of mail: my house hath been
assaulted,
And when I walk abroad, the populace,
With fingers pointed like so many daggers,
Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and Philip;
And when I sleep, a hundred men-at-arms
Guard my poor dreams for England.
Men would murder me,
Because they think me favorer of this marriage.

Mary. And that were hard upon you, my Lord Chancellor.

Gardiner. But our young Earl of Devon —

Mary. Earl of Devon? I freed him from the Tower, placed him at Court; I made him Earl of Devon, and — the fool — He wrecks his health and wealth on courtesans, And rolls himself in carrion like a dog.

Gardiner. More like a school-boy that hath broken bounds, Sickening himself with sweets.

Mary. I will not hear of him. Good, then, they will revolt: but I am Tudor, And shall control them.

Gardiner. I will help you, Madam, Even to the utmost. All the church is grateful.

You have ousted the mock priest; repulped The shepherd of St. Peter, raised the rood again, And brought us back the mass. I am all thanks To God and to your Grace: yet I know well, Your people, and I go with them so far, Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard here to play The tyrant, or in commonwealth or church.

Mary (*showing the picture*). Is this the face of one who plays the tyrant?

Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and gentle?

Gardiner. Madam, methinks a cold face and a haughty.

And when your Highness talks of Courtenay —

Ay, true — a goodly one. I would his life

Were half as goodly (*aside*).

Mary. What is that you mutter?

Gardiner. Oh, Madam, take it bluntly; marry Philip, And be stepmother of a score of sons!

The prince is known in Spain, in Flanders, ha!

For Philip —

Mary. You offend us; you may leave us.

You see thro' warping glasses.

Gardiner. If your Majesty —

Mary. I have sworn upon the body and blood of Christ

I'll none but Philip.

Gardiner. Hath your Grace so sworn?

Mary. Ay, Simon Renard knows it.

Gardiner. News to me! It then remains for your poor Gardiner,

So you still care to trust him somewhat less

Than Simon Renard, to compose the event

In some such form as least may harm your Grace.

Mary. I'll have the scandal sounded to the mud.

I know it a scandal.

Gardiner. All my hope is now It may be found a scandal.

Mary. You offend us.

Gardiner (*aside*). These princes are like children, must be physick'd,

The bitter in the sweet. I have lost mine office,

It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a fool.

[*Exit*.]

Enter USHER.

Mary. Who waits ?

Usher. The Ambassador from France, your Grace.

Mary (sits down). Bid him come in. Good morning, Sir de Noailles.

[*Exit Usher.*]

Noailles (entering). A happy morning to your Majesty.

Mary. And I should some time have a happy morning ; I have had none yet. What says the King your Master ?

Noailles. Madam, my master hears with much alarm, That you may marry Philip, Prince of Spain — Foreseeing, with whate'er unwillingness, That if this Philip be the titular king Of England, and at war with him, your Grace

And kingdom will be suck'd into the war,

Ay, tho' you long for peace ; wherefore, my master, If but to prove your Majesty's goodwill,

Would fain have some fresh treaty drawn between you.

Mary. Why some fresh treaty ? wherefore should I do it ?

Sir, if we marry, we shall still maintain

All former treaties with his Majesty. Our royal word for that ! and your good master,

Pray God he do not be the first to break them,

Must be content with that ; and so, farewell.

Noailles (going, returns). I would your answer had been other, Madam,

For I foresee dark days.

Mary. And so do I, sir ; Your master works against me in the dark.

I do believe he holp Northumberland Against me.

Noailles. Nay, pure phantasy, your Grace.

Why should he moye against you ?

Mary. Will you hear why ? Mary of Scotland, — for I have not own'd

My sister, and I will not, — after me

Is heir of England ; and my royal father,

To make the crown of Scotland one with ours,

Had mark'd her for my brother Edward's bride ;

Ay, but your king stole her a babe from Scotland

In order to betroth her to your Dauphin.

See then : Mary of Scotland, married to your Dauphin,

Would make our England, France ; Mary of England, joining hands with Spain,

Would be too strong for France. Yea, were there issue born to her,

Spain and we, One crown, might rule the world.

There lies your fear. That is your drift. You play at hide and seek.

Show me your faces !

Noailles. Madam, I am amazed : French, I must needs wish all good things for France.

That must be pardon'd me ; but I protest

Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight

Than mine into the future. We but seek

Some settled ground for peace to stand upon.

Mary. Well, we will leave all this, sir, to our council.

Have you seen Philip ever ?

Noailles. Only once.

Mary. Is this like Philip ?

Noailles. Ay, but nobler-looking.

Mary. Hath he the large ability of Emperor ?

Noailles. No, surely.

Mary. I can make allowance for thee,
Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.

Noailles. Make no allowance for the naked truth.
He is every way a lesser man than Charles ;
Stone-hard, ice-cold — no dash of daring in him.

Mary. If cold, his life is pure.
Noailles. Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.
Mary. Sayst thou ?

Noailles. A very wanton life indeed (*smiling*).

Mary. Your audience is concluded, sir. * [Exit Noailles.]
You cannot

Learn a man's nature from his natural foe.

Enter USHER.

Who waits ?

Usher. The Ambassador of Spain, yot : Grace. [Exit.]

Enter SIMON RENARD.

Mary (*rising to meet him*). Thou art ever welcome, Simon Renard. Hast thou Brought me the letter which thine Emperor promised Long since, a formal offer of the hand Of Philip ?

Renard. Nay, your Grace, it hath not reach'd me. I know not wherefore — some mischance of flood, And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse, or wave And wind at their old battle : he must have written.

Mary. But Philip never writes me one poor word, Which in his absence had been all my wealth.

Strange in a wooper !

Renard. Yet I know the Prince, So your king-parliament suffer him to land, Yearns to set foot upon your island shore.

Mary. God change the pebble which his kingly foot First presses into some more costly stone Than ever blinded eye. I'll have one mark it And bring it me. I'll have it burnish'd firelike ; I'll set it round with gold, with pearl, with diamond. Let the great angel of the church come with him ; Stand on the deck and spread his wings for sail ! God lay the waves and strow the storms at sea, And here at land among the people ! O Renard, I am much beset, I am almost in despair. Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is ours ;

But for our heretic Parliament — *Renard.* O Madam, You fly your thoughts like kites. My master, Charles, Bade you go softly with your heretics here, Until your throne had ceased to tremble. Then Spit them like larks for aught I care. Besides, When Henry broke the carcase of your church To pieces, there were many wolves among you Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into their den. The Pope would have you make them render these ; So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole ; ill counsel ! These let them keep at present ; stir not yet This matter of the Church lands. At his coming Your star will rise.

Mary. My star ! a baleful one. I see but the black night, and hear the wolf. What star ?

Renard. Your star will be your princely son,
Heir of this England and the Netherlands!
And if your wolf the while should howl for more,
We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish gold.
I do believe, I have dusted some already,
That, soon or late, your Parliament is ours.

Mary. Why do they talk so foully of your Prince,
Renard?

Renard. The lot of Princes. To sit high
Is to be lied about.

Mary. They call him cold,
Haughty, ay, worse.

Renard. Why, doubtless, Philip shows
Some of the bearing of your blue blood — still
All within measure — nay, it well becomes him.

Mary. Hath he the large ability of his father?

Renard. Nay, some believe that he will go beyond him.

Mary. Is this like him?

Renard. Ay, somewhat; but your Philip
Is the most princelike Prince beneath the sun.

This is a daub to Philip.

Mary. Of a pure life?

Renard. As an angel among angels.
Yea, by Heaven,

The text — Your Highness knows it,
"Whosoever

Looketh after a woman," would not graze

The Prince of Spain. You are happy in him there.

Chaste as your Grace!

Mary. I am happy in him there.

Renard. And would be altogether happy, Madam,
So that your sister were but look'd to closer.

You have sent her from the court, but then she goes,
I warrant, not to hear the nightingales,
But hatch you some new treason in the woods.

Mary. We have our spies abroad to catch her tripping,
And then if caught, to the Tower.

Renard. The Tower! the block! The word has turn'd your Highness pale; the thing

Was no such scarscrow in your father's time.

I have heard, the tongue yet quiver'd with the jest
When the head leapt — so common!
I do think

To save your crown that it must come to this.

Mary. No, Renard; it must never come to this.

Renard. Not yet; but your old Traitors of the Tower —
Why, when you put Northumberland to death,

The sentence having past upon them all,

Spared you the Duke of Suffolk,
Guildford Dudley,

Ev'n that young girl who dared to wear your crown?

Mary. Dared? nay, not so; the child obey'd her father.

Spite of her tears her father forced it on her.

Renard. Good Madam, when the Roman wish'd to reign,
He slew not him alone who wore the purple,

But his assessor in the throne, perchance

A child more innocent than Lady Jane.

Mary. I am English Queen, not Roman Emperor.

Renard. Yet too much mercy is a want of mercy,

And wastes more life. Stamp out the fire, or this

Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn the throne

Where you should sit with Philip: he will not come

Till she be gone.

Mary. Indeed, if that were true —
For Philip comes, one hand in mine,
and one
Steadying the tremulous pillars of the
Church —
But no, no, no. Farewell. I am
somewhat faint
With our long talk. Tho' Queen, I
am not Queen
Of mine own heart, which every now
and then
Beats me half dead: yet stay, this
golden chain —
My father on a birthday gave it me,
And I have broken with my father —
take
And wear it as a memorial of a morn-
ing
Which found me full of foolish doubts,
and leaves me
As hopeful.
Renard (aside). Whew — the folly of
all follies
Is to be love-sick for a shadow.
(Aloud) Madam,
This chains me to your service, not
with gold,
But dearest links of love. Farewell,
and trust me,
Philip is yours. [Exit.
Mary. Mine — but not yet all mine.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Your Council is in Session,
please your Majesty.
Mary. Sir, let them sit. I must
have time to breathe.
No, say I come. (Exit Usher.) I
won by boldness once.
The Emperor counsell'd me to fly to
Flanders.
I would not; but a hundred miles I
rode,
Sent out my letters, call'd my friends
together,
Struck home and won.
And when the Council would not
crown me — thought
To bind me first by oaths I could not
keep,

And keep with Christ and conscience
— was it boldness
Or weakness that won there? when I,
their Queen,
Cast myself down upon my knees
before them,
And those hard men brake into woman
tears,
Ev'n Gardiner, all amazed, and in that
passion
Gave me my Crown. .

Enter ALICE.

Girl; hast thou ever heard
Slanders against Prince Philip in our
Court?

Alice. What slanders? I, your
Grace; no, never.

Mary. Nothing?

Alice. Never, your Grace.

Mary. See that you neither hear
them nor repeat!

Alice (aside). Good Lord! but I
have heard a thousand such.
Ay, and repeated them as often —
mum!
Why comes that old fox-Fleming back
again?

Enter RENARD.

Renard. Madam, I scarce had left
your Grace's presence
Before I chanced upon the messenger
Who brings that letter which we
waited for —

The formal offer of Prince Philip's
hand.
It craves an instant answer, Ay or
No.

Mary. An instant Ay or No! the
Council sits.

Give it me quick.

Alice (stepping before her). Your
Highness is all trembling.

Mary. Make way.

[Exit into the Council Chamber.

Alice. O, Master Renard, Master
Renard,
If you have falsely painted your fine
Prince;
Praised, where you should have
blamed him, I pray God

No woman ever love you, Master Renard.
It breaks my heart to hear her moan at night
As tho' the nightmare never left her bed.
Renard. My pretty maiden, tell me, did you ever sigh for a beard?

Alice. That's not a pretty question.
Renard. Not prettily put? I mean, my pretty maiden, A pretty man for such a pretty maiden.
Alice. My Lord of Devon is a pretty man.
I hate him. Well, but if I have, what then?
Renard. Then, pretty maiden, you should know that whether A wind be warm or cold, it serves to fan
A kindled fire.
Alice. According to the song.

His friends would praise him, I believed 'em,
His foes would blame him, and I scorn'd 'em,
His friends — as Angels I received 'em,
His foes — the Devil had suborn'd 'em.

Renard. Peace, pretty maiden.
I hear them stirring in the Council Chamber.
Lord Paget's "Ay" is sure — who else? and yet,
They are all too much at odds to close at once
In one full-throated No! Her Highness comes.

Enter MARY.

Alice. How deathly pale! — a chair, your Highness.
[*Bringing one to the Queen.*
Renard. Madam,
The Council?
Mary. Ay! My Philip is all mine.
[*Sinks into chair, half fainting.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ALLINGTON CASTLE.

Sir Thomas Wyatt. I do not hear from Carew or the Duke Of Suffolk, and till then I should not move.
The Duke hath gone to Leicester;
Carew stirs In Devon: that fine porcelain Courtenay,
Save that he fears he might be crack'd in using,
(I have known a semi-madman in my time
So fancy-ridd'n) should be in Devon too.

Enter WILLIAM.
News abroad, William?

William. None so new, Sir Thomas, and none so old, Sir Thomas. No new news that Philip comes to wed Mary, no old news that all men hate it. Old Sir Thomas would have hated it. The bells are ringing at Maidstone. Doesn't your worship hear?

Wyatt. Ay, for the Saints are come to reign again.
Most like it is a Saint's-day. There's no call
As yet for me; so in this pause, before The mine be fired, it were a pious work
To string my father's sonnets, left about
Like loosely-scatter'd jewels, in fair order,
And head them with a lamer rhyme of mine,
To grace his memory.

William. Ay, why not, Sir Thomas? He was a fine courtier, he; Queen Anne loved him. All the women loved him. I loved him, I was in Spain with him. I couldn't eat in Spain, I couldn't sleep in Spain. I hate Spain, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. But thou couldst drink in Spain if I remember.

William. Sir Thomas, we may grant the wine. Old Sir Thomas always granted the wine.

Wyatt. Hand me the casket with my father's sonnets.

William. Ay — sonnets — a fine courtier of the old Court, old Sir Thomas. [Exit.]

Wyatt. Courtier of many courts, he loved the more His own gray towers, plain life and letter'd peace; To read and rhyme in solitary fields, The lark above, the nightingale below, And answer them in song. The sire begets Not half his likeness in the son. I fail Where he was fullest: yet — to write it down. [He writes.]

Re-enter WILLIAM.

William. There is news, there is news, and no call for sonnet-sorting now, nor for sonnet-making either, but ten thousand men on Penenden Heath all calling after your worship, and your worship's name heard into Maidstone market, and your worship the first man in Kent and Christendom, for the Queen's down, and the world's up, and your worship a-top of it.

Wyatt. Inverted Æsop — mountain out of mouse. Say for ten thousand ten — and pot-house knaves, Brain-dizzied with a draught of morning ale.

Enter ANTONY KNYVETT.

William. Here's Antony Knyvett. *Knyvett.* Look you, Master Wyatt, Tear up that woman's work there.

Wyatt. No; not these, Dumb children of my father, that will speak When I and thou and all rebellions lie Dead bodies without voice. Song flies you know For ages.

Knyvett. Tut, your sonnet's a flying ant, Wing'd for a moment.

Wyatt. Well, for mine own work, [Tearing the paper.] It lies there in six pieces at your feet; For all that I can carry it in my head.

Knyvett. If you can carry your head upon your shoulders.

Wyatt. I fear you come to carry it off my shoulders, And sonnet-making's safer.

Knyvett. Why, good Lord, Write you as many sonnets as you will.

Ay, but not now; what, have you eyes, ears, brains? This Philip and the black-faced swarms of Spain, The hardest, cruellest people in the world, Come locusting upon us, eat us up, Confiscate lands, goods, money —

Wyatt, Wyatt, Wake, or the stout old island will become

A rotten limb of Spain. They roar for you

On Penenden Heath, a thousand of them — more —

All arm'd, waiting a leader; there's no glory

Like his who saves his country: and you sit

Sing-singing here; but, if I'm any judge,

By God, you are as poor a poet, Wyatt,

As a good soldier.

Wyatt. You as poor a critic As an honest friend: you stroke me on one cheek,

Buffet the other. Come, you blusterer, Antony!

You know I know all this. I must not move

Until I hear from Carew and the Duke. I fear the mine is fired before the time.

Knyvett (showing a paper). But here's some Hebrew. Faith, I half forgot it.

Look ; can you make it English ? A
strange youth
Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd,
" Wyatt,"
And whisking round a corner, show'd
his back
Before I read his face.

Wyatt. Ha ! Courtenay's cipher.
[Reads.]

" Sir Peter Carew fled to France : it
is thought the Duke will be taken.
I am with you still ; but, for appear-
ance sake, stay with the Queen. Gar-
diner knows, but the Council are all at
odds, and the Queen hath no force for
resistance. Move, if you move, at
once."

Is Peter Carew fled ? Is the Duke
taken ?
Down scabbard, and out sword ! and
let Rebellion
Roar till throne rock, and crown fall.
No ; not that ;
But we will teach Queen Mary how to
reign.

Who are those that shout below there ?
Knyvett. Why, some fifty
That follow'd me from Penenden
Heath in hope
To hear you speak.

Wyatt. Open the window, Knyvett ;
The mine is fired, and I will speak to
them.

Men of Kent ; England of England ;
you that have kept your old customs
upright, while all the rest of England
bow'd theirs to the Norman, the cause
that hath brought us together is not
the cause of a county or a shire, but
of this England, in whose crown our
Kent is the fairest jewel. Philip shall
not wed Mary ; and ye have called me
to be your leader. I know Spain. I
have been there with my father ; I
have seen them in their own land ;
have marked the haughtiness of their
nobles ; the cruelty of their priests.
If this man marry our Queen, however
the Council and the Commons may
fence round his power with restriction,

he will be King, King of England, my
masters ; and the Queen, and the laws,
and the people, his slaves. What ?
shall we have Spain on the throne and
in the parliament ; Spain in the pulpit
and on the law-bench ; Spain in all the
great offices of state ; Spain in our
ships, in our forts, in our houses, in
our beds ?

Crowd. No ! no ! no Spain !
William. No Spain in our beds --
that were worse than all. I have been
there with old Sir Thomas, and the
beds I know. I hate Spain.

A Peasant. But, Sir Thomas, must we
levy war against the Queen's Grace ?

Wyatt. No, my friend ; war for the
Queen's Grace — to save her from her-
self and Phillip — war against Spain.
And think not we shall be alone —
thousands will flock to us. The
Council, the Court itself, is on our side.
The Lord Chancellor himself is on our
side. The King of France is with us ;
the King of Denmark is with us ; the
world is with us — war against Spain !
And if we move not now, yet it will be
known that we have moved ; and if
Philip come to be King, O, my God !
the rope, the rack, the thumbscrew,
the stake, the fire. If we move not
now, Spain moves, bribes our nobles
with her gold, and creeps, creeps
snake-like about our legs till we can-
not move at all ; and ye know, my
masters, that wherever Spain hath
ruled she hath wither'd all beneath her.
Look at the New World — a
paradise made hell ; the red man, that
good helpless creature, starved,
maim'd, flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd,
buried alive, worried by dogs ; and here,
nearer home, the Netherlands,
Sicily, Naples, Lombardy. I say no
more — only this, their lot is yours.
Forward to London with me ! forward
to London ! If ye love your liberties
or your skins, forward to London !

Crowd. Forward to London ! A
Wyatt ! a Wyatt !

Wyatt. But first to Rochester, to
take the guns

From out the vessels lying in the river.

Then on.

A Peasant. Ay, but I fear we be too few, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. Not many yet. The world as yet, my friend, is not half-waked; but every parish tower Shall clang and clash alarum as we pass, And pour along the land, and swell'n and fed With indraughts and side-currents, in full force Roll upon London.

Crowd. A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!

Knyvett. Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?

Wyatt. I'll think upon it, Knyvett.

Knyvett. Or Lady Jane?

Wyatt. No, poor soul; no. Ah, gray old castle of Allington, green field Beside the brimming Medway, it may chance That I shall never look upon you more.

Knyvett. Come, now, you're sonnetting again.

Wyatt. Not I. I'll have my head set higher in the state; Or—if the Lord God will it—on the stake.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—GUILDFHALL.

MR THOMAS WHITE (The Lord Mayor), LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, ALDERMEN and CITIZENS.

White. I trust the Queen comes hither with her guards.

Howard. Ay, all in arms.

[*Several of the citizens move hastily out of the hall.*

Why do they hurry out there?

White. My Lord, cut out the rotten from your apple,

Your apple eats the better. Let them go.

They go like those old Pharisees in John

Convicted by their conscience, arrant cowards,

Or tamperers with that treason out of Kent.

When will her Grace be here?

Howard. In some few minutes. She will address your guilds and companies.

I have striven in vain to raise a man for her.

But help her in this exigency, make Your city loyal, and be the mightiest man

This day in England.

White. I am Thomas White. Few things have fail'd to which I set my will.

I do my most and best.

Howard. You know that after The Captain Brett, who went with your train bands

To fight with Wyatt, had gone over to him

With all his men, the Queen in that distress

Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the traitor,

Feigning to treat with him about her marriage—

Know too what Wyatt said.

White. He'd sooner be, While this same marriage question was being argued,

Trusted than trust—the scoundrel—and demanded

Possession of her person and the Tower.

Howard. And four of her poor Council too, my Lord,

As hostages.

White. I know it. What do and say

Your Council at this hour?

Howard. I will trust you. We fling ourselves on you, my Lord.

The Council, The Parliament as well, are troubled waters;

And yet like waters of the fen they
know not
Which way to flow. All hangs on her
address,
And upon you, Lord Mayor.
White. How look'd the city
When now you past it? Quiet?
Howard. Like our Council,
Your city is divided. As we past,
Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There
were citizens
Stood each before his shut-up booth,
and look'd
As grim and grave as from a funeral.
And here a knot of ruffians all in
rags,
With execrating execrable eyes,
Glared at the citizen. Here was a
young mother,
Her face on flame, her red hair all
blown back,
She shrilling "Wyatt," while the boy
she held
Mimick'd and piped her "Wyatt," as
red as she
In hair and cheek; and almost elbow-
ing her,
So close they stood, another, mute as
death,
And white as her own milk; her babe
in arms
Had felt the faltering of his mother's
heart,
And look'd as bloodless. Here a pious
Catholic,
Mumbling and mixing up in his scared
prayers
Heaven and earth's Maries; over his
bow'd shoulder
Scowl'd that world-hated and world-
hating beast,
A haggard Anabaptist. Many such
groups.
The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth,
Courtenay,
Nay the Queen's right to reign—'fore
God, the rogues—
Were freely buzzed among them. So
I say
Your city is divided, and I fear
One scruple, this or that way, of suc-
cess

Would turn it thither. Wherefore
now the Queen
In this low pulse and palsy of the
state,
Bade me to tell you that she counts on
you
And on myself as her two hands; on
you,
In your own city, as her right, my
Lord,
For you are loyal.
White. Am I Thomas White?
One word before she comes. Eliza-
beth—
Her name is much abused among
these traitors.
Where is she? She is loved by all
of us.
I scarce have heart to mingle in this
matter,
If she should be mishandled.
Howard. No; she shall not.
The Queen had written her word to
come to court:
Methought I smelt out Renard in the
letter,
And fearing for her, sent a secret mis-
sive,
Which told her to be sick. Happily
or not,
It found her sick indeed.
White. God send her well;
Here comes her Royal Grace.
Enter Guards, MARY, and GARDINER.
Sir THOMAS WHITE leads her to a
raised seat on the dais.
White. I, the Lord Mayor, and
these our companies
And guilds of London, gathered here,
beseech
Your Highness to accept our lowliest
thanks
For your most princely presence; and
we pray
That we, your true and loyal citizens,
From your own royal lips, at once
may know
The wherefore of this coming, and so
learn
Your royal will, and do it.—I, Lord
Mayor

Of London, and our guilds and companies.

Mary. In mine own person am I come to you,
To tell you what indeed ye see and know,
How traitorously these rebels out of Kent
Have made strong head against ourselves and you.
They would not have me wed the Prince of Spain ;
That was their pretext — so they spake at first —
But we sent divers of our Council to them,
And by their answers to the question ask'd,
It doth appear this marriage is the least
Of all their quarrel.
They have betrayed the treason of their hearts :
Seek to possess our person, hold our Tower,
Place and displace our councillors, and use
Both us and them according as they will.
Now what I am ye know right well — your Queen ;
To whom, when I was wedded to the realm
And the realm's laws (the spousal ring whereof,
Not ever to be laid aside, I wear
Upon this finger), ye did promise full
Allegiance and obedience to the death.
Ye know my father was the rightful heir
Of England, and his right came down to me,
Corroborate by your acts of Parliament :
And as ye were most loving unto him,
So doubtless will ye show yourselves to me.
Wherefore, ye will not brook that anyone
Should seize our person, occupy our state,

More specially a traitor so presumptuous

As this same Wyatt, who hath tamper'd with
A public ignorance, and, under color
Of such a cause as hath no color, seeks
To bend the laws to his own will, and yield
Full scope to persons rascal and forlorn,
To make free spoil and havock of your goods.

Now as your Prince, I say,
I, that was never mother, cannot tell
How mothers love their children ; yet, methinks,
A prince as naturally may love his people
As these their children ; and be sure your Queen
So loves you, and so loving, needs must deem
This love by you return'd as heartily ;
And thro' this common knot and bond of love,
Doubt not they will be speedily overthrown.
As to this marriage, ye shall understand
We made thereto no treaty of ourselves,
And set no foot theretoward unadvised
Of all our Privy Council ; furthermore,
This marriage had the assent of those
to whom
The king, my father, did commit his trust ;
Who not alone esteem'd it honorable,
But for the wealth and glory of our realm,
And all our loving subjects, most expedient.
As to myself,
I am not so set on wedlock as to choose
But where I list, nor yet so amorous
That I must needs be husbanded ; I thank God,
I have lived a virgin, and I noway doubt
But that with God's grace, I can live so still.
Yet if it might please God that I should leave
Some fruit of mine own body after me

To be your king, ye would rejoice
thereat,
And it would be your comfort, as I
trust;
And truly, if I either thought or knew
This marriage should bring loss or
danger to you,
My subjects, or impair in any way
This royal state of England, I would
never
Consent thereto, nor marry while I live:
Moreover, if this marriage should not
seem,
Before our own High Court of Parlia-
ment,
To be of rich advantage to our realm,
We will refrain, and not alone from
this,
Likewise from any other, out of which
Looms the least chance of peril to our
realm.
Wherefore be bold, and with your law-
ful Prince
Stand fast against our enemies and
yours,
And fear them not. I fear them not.
My Lord,
I leave Lord William Howard in your
city,
To guard and keep you whole and
safe from all
The spoil and sackage aim'd at by
these rebels,
Who mouth and foam against the
Prince of Spain.

Vox. Long live Queen Mary!
Down with Wyatt!
The Queen!
White. Three voices from our guilds
and companies!
You are shy and proud like English-
men, my masters,
And will not trust your voices. Under-
stand:
Your lawful Prince hath come to cast
herself
On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to
fall
Into the wide-spread arms of fealty,
And finds you statutes. Speak at once
— and all!
For whom?

Our sovereign Lady by King Harry's
will;
The Queen of England — or the Kent-
ish Squire?
I know you loyal. Speak! in the
name of God!
The Queen of England or the rabble
of Kent?
The reeking dungfork master of the
mace!
Your havings wasted by the scythe
and spade —
Your rights and charters hobnail'd
into slush —
Your houses fired — your gutters
bubbling blood —
Acclamation. No! No! The Queen!
the Queen!
White. Your Highness hears
This burst and bass of loyal harmony,
And how we each and all of us abhor
The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt
Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now
make oath
To raise your Highness thirty thou-
sand men,
And arm and strike as with one hand,
and brush
This Wyatt from our shoulders, like
a flea
That might have leapt upon us un-
awares.
Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens,
all,
With all your trades, and guilds, and
companies.
Citizens. We swear!
Mary. We thank your Lordship and
your loyal city.
[Exit Mary attended.
White. I trust this day, thro' God,
I have saved the crown.
First Alderman. Ay, so my Lord
of Pembroke in command
Of all her force be safe; but there are
doubts.
Second Alderman. I hear that Gar-
diner, coming with the Queen,
And meeting Pembroke, bent to his
saddle-hoof,
As if to win the man by flattering him.
Is he so safe to fight upon her side?

First Alderman. If not, there's no man safe.

White. Yes, Thomas White. I am safe enough; no man need flat-
ter me.

Second Alderman. Nay, no man need; but did you mark our Queen?

The color freely play'd into her face,
And the half sight which makes her look so stern,
Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of hers,
To read our faces; I have never seen her
So queenly or so goodly.

White. Courage, sir,
That makes or man or woman look their goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never whine

Like that poor heart, Northumberland, at the block.

Bagenhall. The man had children, and he whined for those.
Methinks most men are but poor-hearted, else
Should we so dote on courage, were it commoner?

The Queen stands up, and speaks for her own self;
And all men cry, She is queenly, she is goodly.

Yet she's no goodlier; tho' my Lord Mayor here,
By his own rule, he hath been so bold to-day,
Should look more goodly than the rest of us.

White. Goodly? I feel most goodly heart and hand,
And strong to throw ten Wyatts and all Kent.

Ha! ha! sir; but you jest; I love it: a jest
In time of danger shows the pulses even.

Be merry! yet, Sir Ralph, you look but sad.

I dare avouch you'd stand up for yourself,

Tho' all the world should bay like winter wolves.

Bagenhall. Who knows? the man is proven by the hour.

White. The man should make the hour, not this the man;
And Thomas White will prove this Thomas Wyatt,
And he will prove an Iden to this Cade,

And he will play the Walworth to this Wat;
Come, sirs, we prate; hence all—gather your men—

Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to Southwark;
I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the Thames,

And see the citizens arm'd. Good day; good day. [Exit White.

Bagenhall. One of much outdoor bluster.

Howard. For all that, Most honest, brave, and skilful; and his wealth
A fountain of perennial alms—his fault
So thoroughly to believe in his own self.

Bagenhall. Yet thoroughly to believe in one's own self,
So one's own self be thorough, were to do
Great things, my Lord.

Howard. It may be.
Bagenhall. I have heard

One of your Council fleer and jeer at him.

Howard. The nursery-cocker'd child will jeer at aught
That may seem strange beyond his nursery.

The statesman that shall jeer and fleer at men,
Makes enemies for himself and for his king;

And if he jeer not seeing the true man
Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool;

And if he see the man and still will jeer,

Tie is child and fool, and traitor to the State.

Who is he? let me shun him.

Bagenhall. Nay, my Lord,
He is damn'd enough already.

Howard. I must set
The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well, Sir Ralph.

Bagenhall. "Who knows?" I am for England. But who knows, That knows the Queen, the Spaniard, and the Pope, Whether I be for Wyatt, or the Queen?

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—LONDON BRIDGE.

Enter SIR THOMAS WYATT and BRETT.

Wyatt. Brett, when the Duke of Norfolk moved against us Thou cried'st "A Wyatt!" and flying to our side Left his all bare, for which I love thee, Brett. Have for thine asking aught that I can give, For thro' thine help we are come to London Bridge; But how to cross it balks me. I fear we cannot.

Brett. Nay, hardly, save by boat, swimming, or wings.

Wyatt. Last night I climb'd into the gate-house, Brett, And scared the gray old porter and his wife. And then I crept along the gloom and saw They had hewn the drawbridge down into the river. It roll'd as black as death; and that same tide Which, coming with our coming, seem'd to smile And sparkle like our fortune as thou said'st, Ran sunless down, and ranon'd against the piers. But o'er the chasm I saw Lord William Howard

By torchlight, and his guard; four guns gaped at me, Black, silent mouths; had Howard spied me there And made them speak, as well he might have done, Their voice had left me none to tell you this.

What shall we do?

Brett. On somehow. To go back Were to lose all.

Wyatt. On over London Bridge We cannot: stay we cannot; there is ordnance On the White Tower and on the Devil's Tower, And pointed full at Southwark; we must round By Kingston Bridge.

Brett. Ten miles about *Wyatt.* Ev'. so. But I have notice from our pa:tiisans Within the city that they will stand by us If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn to-morrow.

Enter one of WYATT'S men.

Man. Sir Thomas, I've found this paper; pray your worship read it; I know not my letters; the old priests taught me nothing.

Wyatt (reads). "Whosoever will apprehend the traitor Thomas Wyatt shall have a hundred pounds for reward."

Man. Is that it? That's a big lot of money.

Wyatt. Ay, ay, my friend; not read it? 'tis not written Half plain enough. Give me a piece of paper!

[*Writes "THOMAS WYATT" large.* There, any man can read that.

[*Sticks it in his cap.*

Brett. But that's foolhardy.

Wyatt. No! boldness, which will give my followers boldness.

Enter MAN with a prisoner.

Man. We found him, your worship, a plundering o' Bishop Winchester's

house ; he says he's a poor gentleman.

Wyatt. Gentleman ! a thief ! Go hang him. Shall we make Those that we come to serve our sharpest foes ?

Brett. Sir Thomas —

Wyatt. Hang him, I say.

Brett. Wyatt, but now you promised me a boon.

Wyatt. Ay, and I warrant this fine fellow's life.

Brett. Ev'n so ; he was my neighbor once in Kent.

He's poor enough, has drunk and gambled out All that he had, and gentleman he was.

We have been glad together ; let him live.

Wyatt. He has gambled for his life, and lost, he hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take thy poor gentleman !

Gamble thyself at once out of my sight,

Or I will dig thee with my dagger. Away !

Women and children !

Enter a Crowd of WOMEN and Children.

First Woman. O Sir Thomas, Sir Thomas, pray you go away. Sir Thomas, or you'll make the White Tower a black 'un for us this blessed day. He'll be the death on us ; and you'll set the Devil's Tower a-spitting, and he'll smash all our bits o' things worse than Philip o' Spain.

Second Woman. Don't ye now go to think that we be for Philip o' Spain.

Third Woman. No, we know that ye be come to kill the Queen, and we'll pray for you all on our bended knees. But o' God's mercy don't ye kill the Queen here, Sir Thomas ; look ye, here's little Dickon, and little Robin, and little Jenny — though she's but a side-cousin — and all on our knees, we pray you to kill the Queen further off, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. My friends, I have not come to kill the Queen Or here or there : I come to save you all, And I'll go further off.

Crowd. Thanks, Sir Thomas, we be beholden to you, and we'll pray for you on our bended knees till our lives' end.

Wyatt. Be happy, I am your friend. To Kingston, forward ! [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.— ROOM IN THE GATE-HOUSE OF WESTMINSTER PALACE.

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD, LADIES.

Gardiner. Their cry is, Philip never shall be king.

Mary. Lord Pembroke in command of all our force

Will front their cry and shatter them into dust.

Alice. Was not Lord Pembroke with Northumberland ?

O madam, if this Pembroke should be false ?

Mary. No, girl ; most brave and loyal, brave and loyal.

His breaking with Northumberland broke Northumberland.

At the park gate he hovers with our guards.

These Kentish ploughmen cannot break the guards.

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Wyat, your Grace, hath broken thro' the guards, And gone to Ludgate.

Gardiner. Madam, I much fear That all is lost ; but we can save your Grace.

The river still is free. I do beseech you,

There yet is time, take boat and pass to Windsor.

Mary. I pass to Windsor and I lose my crown.

Gardiner. Pass, then, I pray your Highness, to the Tower.

Mary. I shall but be their prisoner
in the Tower.

Cries without. The traitor! treason!
Pembroke!

Ladies. Treason! treason!

Mary. Peace.

False to Northumberland, is he false
to me?

Bear witness, Renard, that I live and
die

The true and faithful bride of Philip
— A sound

Of feet and voices thickening hither
— blows —

Hark, there is battle at the palace
gates,

And I will out upon the gallery.

Ladies. No, no, your Grace; see
there the arrows flying.

Mary. I am Harry's daughter, Tu-
dor, and not fear.

[Goes out on the gallery.
The guards are all driven in, skulk
into corners
Like rabbits to their holes. A gra-
cious guard
Truly; shame on them! they have
shut the gates!]

Enter SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

Southwell. The porter, please your
Grace, hath shut the gates
On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-
at-arms,
If this be not your Grace's order, cry
To have the gates set wide again, and
they
With their good battleaxes will do you
right
Against all traitors.

Mary. They are the flower of Eng-
land; set the gates wide.

[Exit Southwell.

Enter COURtenay.

Courtenay. All lost, all lost, all
yielded! a barge, a barge!

The Queen must to the Tower.

Mary. Whence come you, sir?

Courtenay. From Charing Cross;
the rebels broke us there,

And I sped hither with what haste I
might

To save my royal cousin.

Mary. Where is Pembroke?

Courtenay. I left him somewhere in
the thick of it.

Mary. Left him and fled; and thou
that wouldst be King,
And hast nor heart nor honor. I my-
self

Will down into the battle and there
bide

The upshot of my quarrel, or die with
those

That are no cowards and no Courte-
nays.

Courtenay. I do not love your Grace
should call me coward.

Enter another MESSENGER.

Messenger. Over, your Grace, all
crush'd; the brave Lord Wil-
liam

Thrust him from Ludgate, and the
traitor flying

To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice
Berkeley

Was taken prisoner.

Mary. To the Tower with him!

Messenger. 'Tis said he told Sir
Maurice there was one
Cognizant of this, and party thereunto,
My Lord of Devon.

Mary. To the Tower with him!

Courtenay. O la, the Tower, the
Tower, always the Tower,
I shall grow into it—I shall be the
Tower.

Mary. Your lordship may not have
so long to wait.

Remove him!

Courtenay. La, to whistle out my
life,

And carve my coat upon the walls
again!

[Exit Courtenay guarded.

Messenger. Also this Wyatt did
confess the Princess
Cognizant thereof, and party there-
unto.

Mary. What? whom—whom did
you say?

Messenger. Elizabeth,
Your Royal sister.

Mary. To the Tower with her!
My foes are at my feet and I am
Queen.

[Gardiner and her Ladies kneel to her.
Gardiner (rising). There let them
lie, your footstool! (*Aside.*) Can
I strike

Elizabeth? — not now and save the
life
Of Devon: if I save him, he and his
Are bound to me — may strike here-
after. (*A loud.*) Madam,
What Wyatt said, or what they said
he said,

Cries of the moment and the street —

Mary. He said it.
Gardiner. Your courts of justice
will determine that.

Renard (advancing). I trust by this
your Highness will allow
Some spiece of wisdom in my telling
you,
When last we talk'd, that Philip would
not come
Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke of
Suffolk,

And Lady Jane had left us.

Mary. They shall die.
Renard. And your so loving sister?
Mary. She shall die.
My foes are at my feet, and Philip
King. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE CONDUIT IN GRACE- CHURCH,

*Painted with the Nine Worthies, among
them King Henry VIII. holding a
book, on it inscribed "Verbum Dei."*

*Enter SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and SIR
THOMAS STAFFORD.*

Bagenhall. A hundred here and
hundreds hang'd in Kent.
The tigress had unsheathe'd her nails
at last,

And Renard and the Chancellor sharp-
en'd them.

In every London street a gibbet
stood.

They are down to-day. Here by this
house was one;
The traitor husband dangled at the
door,

And when the traitor wife came out
for bread

To still the petty treason therewithin,
Her cap would brush his heels.

Stafford. It is Sir Ralph,
And muttering to himself as hereto-
fore.

Sir, see you aught up yonder?

Bagenhall. I miss something.
The tree that only bears dead fruit is
gone.

Stafford. What tree, sir?

Bagenhall. Well, the tree in
Virgil, sir,

That bears not its own apples.

Stafford. What! the gallows?

Bagenhall. Sir, this dead fruit was
ripening overmuch,
And had to be removed lest living
Spain

Should sicken at dead England.

Stafford. Not so dead,
But that a shock may rouse her.

Bagenhall. I believe
Sir Thomas Stafford?

Stafford. I am ill disguised.

Bagenhall. Well, are you not in
peril here?

Stafford. I think so.
I came to feel the pulse of England,
whether

It beats hard at this marriage. Did
you see it?

Bagenhall. Stafford, I am a sad man
and a serious.

Far liefer had I in my country hall
Been reading some old book, with
mine old hound

Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old
flask of wine

Beside me, than have seen it: yet I
saw it.

Stafford. Good, was it splendid?
Bagenhall. Ay, if Dukes, and Earls,

And Counts, and sixty Spanish cavaliers,
Some six or seven Bishops, diamonds,
pearls,
That royal commonplace too, cloth
of gold,
Could make it so.

Stafford. And what was Mary's dress?

Bagenhall. Good faith, I was too sorry for the woman
To mark the dress. She wore red shoes!

Stafford. Red shoes!

Bagenhall. Scarlet, as if her feet were wash'd in blood,
As if she had waded in it.

Stafford. Were your eyes so bashful that you look'd no higher?

Bagenhall. A diamond, And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's love,
Who hath not any for any,—tho' a true one,
Blazed false upon her heart.

Stafford. But this proud Prince—
Bagenhall. Nay, he is King, you know, the King of Naples.

The father ceded Naples, that the son
Being a King, might wed a Queen—
O he

Flamed in brocade—white satin his trunkhose,
Inwrought with silver,—on his neck a collar,
Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging down from this
The Golden Fleece—and round his knee, misplaced,
Our English Garter, studded with great emeralds,
Rubies, I know not what. Have you had enough
Of all this gear!

Stafford. Ay, since you hate the telling it.

How look'd the Queen?

Bagenhall. No fairer for her jewels.
And I could see that as the new-made couple
Came from the Minster, moving side by side

Beneath one canopy, ever and anon
She cast on him a vassal smile of love.

Which Philip with a glance of some distaste,
Or so methought, return'd. I may be wrong, sir.

This marriage will not hold.

Stafford. I think with you. The King of France will help to break it.

Bagenhall. France! We once had half of France, and hurl'd our battles Into the heart of Spain; but England now

Is but a ball chuck'd between France and Spain,
His in whose hand she drops; Harry of Bolingbroke Had holpen Richard's tottering throne to stand,
Could Harry have foreseen that all our nobles

Would perish on the civil slaughter-field,
And leave the people naked to the crown,
And the crown naked to the people;

the crown Female, too! Sir, no woman's regimen Can save us. We are fallen, and as I think,

Never to rise again.

Stafford. You are too black-blooded. I'd make a move myself to hinder that:
I know some lusty fellows there in France.

Bagenhall. You would but make us weaker, Thomas Stafford. Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he fail'd,

And strengthen'd Philip.

Stafford. Did not his last breath Clear Courtenay and the Princess from the charge
Of being his co-rebels?

Bagenhall. Ay, but then What such a one as Wyatt says is nothing:

We have no men among us. The new
Lords
Are quieted with their sop of Abbey-
lands,
And ev'n before the Queen's face
Gardiner buys them
With Philip's gold. All greed, no
faith, no courage!

Why, ev'n the haughty prince, North-
umberland,
The leader of our Reformation, knelt
And blubber'd like a lad, and on the
scaffold
Recanted, and resold himself to Rome.

Stafford. I swear you do your
country wrong, Sir Ralph.

I know a set of exiles over there,
Dare-devils, that would eat fire and
spit it out

At Philip's beard: they pillage Spain
already.

The French King winks at it. An
hour will come
When they will sweep her from the
seas. No men?

Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true
man?

Is not Lord William Howard a true
man?

Yea, you yourself, altho' you are
black-blooded:

And I, by God, believe myself a man.
Ay, even in the church there is a
man —

Cranmer.

Fly would he not, when all men bade
him fly.

And what a letter he wrote against
the Pope!

There's a brave man, if any.

Bagenhall. Ay; if it hold.

Crowd (coming on). God save their
Graces!

Stafford. Bagenhall, I see
The Tudor green and white. (*Trum-
pets.*) They are coming now.
And here's a crowd as thick as her-
ring-shoals.

Bagenhall. Be limpets to this pillar,
or we are torn

Down the strong wave of brawlers.

Crowd. God save their Graces!

[*Procession of Trumpeters, Javo-
lin-men, etc.; then Spanish and
Flemish Nobles intermingled.*

Stafford. Worth seeing, Bagenhall!

These black dog-Dons

Garb themselves bravely. Who's the
long-face there,

Looks very Spain of very Spain?

Bagenhall. The Duke

Of Alva, an iron soldier.

Stafford. And the Dutchman,
Now laughing at some jest?

Bagenhall. William of Orange,
William the Silent.

Stafford. Why do they call him so?

Bagennall. He keeps, they say,
some secret that may cost
Philip his life.

Stafford. But then he looks so
merry.

Bagenhall. I cannot tell you why
they call him so.

[*The King and Queen pass, at-
tended by Peers of the Realm,
Officers of State, etc. Cannon
shot off.*

Crowd. Philip and Mary, Philip
and Mary!

Long live the King and Queen, Philip
and Mary!

Stafford. They smile as if content
with one another.

Bagenhall. A smile abroad is oft a
scowl at home.

[*King and Queen pass on. Pro-
cession.*

First Citizen. I thought this Philip
had been one of those black devils of
Spain, but he hath a yellow beard.

Second Citizen. Not red like
Iscariot's.

First Citizen. Like a carrot's, as
thou say'st, and English carrot's better
than Spanish licorice; but I thought
he was a beast.

Third Citizen. Certain I had heard
that every Spaniard carries a tail like
a devil under his trunk-hose.

Tailor. Ay, but see what trunk-
hoses! Lord! they be fine; I never
stitch'd none such. They make amends
for the tails.

Fourth Citizen. Tut! every Spanish priest will tell you that all English heretics have tails.

Fifth Citizen. Death and the Devil — if he find I have one —

Fourth Citizen. Lo! thou hast call'd them up! here they come — a pale horse for Death and Gardiner for the Devil.

Enter GARDINER (*turning back from the procession*).

Gardiner. Knave, wilt thou wear thy cap before the Queen?

Man. My Lord, I stand so squeezed among the crowd

I cannot lift my hands unto my head.

Gardiner. Knock off his cap there, some of you about him!

See there be others that can use their hands.

Thou art one of Wyatt's men?

Man. No, my Lord, no.

Gardiner. Thy name, thou knave?

Man. I am nobody, my Lord.

Gardiner (*shouting*). God's passion! knave, thy name?

Man. I have ears to hear.

Gardiner. Ay, rascal, if I leave thee ears to hear.

Find out his name and bring it me (*to Attendant*).

Attendant. Ay, my Lord.

Gardiner. Knave, thou shalt lose nine ears and find thy tongue, And shalt be thankful if I leave thee that. [*Coming before the Conduit*.]

The conduit painted — the nine worthies — ay!

But then what's here? King Harry with a scroll.

Ha — Verbum Dei — verbum — word of God!

God's passion! do you know the knave that painted it?

Attendant. I do, my Lord.

Gardiner. Tell him to paint it out, And put some fresh device in lieu of it —

A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir; ha?

There is no heresy there.

Attendant. I will, my Lord; The man shall paint a pair of gloves.

I am sure (Knowing the man) he wrought it ignorantly, And not from any malice.

Gardiner. Word of God In English! over this the brainless loons

That cannot spell Esaias from St. Paul,

Make themselves drunk and mad, fly out and flare

Into rebellions. I'll have their bibles burnt.

The bible is the priest's. Ay! fellow, what!

Stand staring at me! shout, you gaping rogue!

Man. I have, my Lord, shouted till I am hoarse.

Gardiner. What hast thou shouted, knave?

Man. Long live Queen Mary!

Gardiner. Knave, there be two. There be both King and Queen, Philip and Mary. Shout!

Man. Nay, but, my Lord, The Queen comes first, Mary and Philip.

Gardiner. Shout, then, Mary and Philip!

Man. Mary and Philip!

Gardiner. Now, Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure, shout for mine!

Philip and Mary!

Man. Must it be so, my Lord?

Gardiner. Ay, knave.

Man. Philip and Mary!

Gardiner. I distrust thee. Thine is a half voice and a lean assent.

What is thy name?

Man. Sanders.

Gardiner. What else?

Man. Zerubbabel.

Gardiner. Where dost thou live?

Man. In Cornhill.

Gardiner. Where, knave, where?

Man. Sign of the Talbot.

Gardiner. Come to me to-morrow.—

Rascal ! this land is like a hill of fire,
One crater opens when another shuts.
But so I get the laws against the
heretic,
Spite of Lord Paget and Lord William
Howard,
And others of our Parliament, revived,
I will show fire on my side—stake
and fire—
Sharp work and short. The knaves
are easily cow'd.
Follow their Majesties.

[Exit. *The crowd following.*

Bagenhall. As proud as Becket.
Stafford. You would not have him
murder'd as Becket was ?
Bagenhall. No — murder fathers
murder : but I say
There is no man — there was one
woman with us —
It was a sin to love her married, dead
I cannot choose but love her.

Stafford. Lady Jane ?
Crowd (going off). God save their
Graces !
Stafford. Did you see her die ?
Bagenhall. No, no ; her innocent
blood had blinded me.
You call me too black-blooded — true
enough

Her dark dead blood is in my heart
with mine.
If ever I cry out against the Pope
Her dark dead blood that ever moves
with mine

Will stir the living tongue and make
the cry .

Stafford. Yet doubtless you can tell
me how she died ?

Bagenhall. Seventeen — and knew
eight languages — in music
Peerless — her needle perfect, and her
learning
Beyond the churchmen ; yet so meek,
so modest,
So wife-like humble to the trivial boy
Mismatch'd with her for policy ! I
have heard
She would not take a last farewell of
him,
She fear'd it might unman him for his
end.

She could not be unmann'd — no, nor
outwoman'd —
Seventeen — a rose of grace !
Girl never breathed to rival such
a rose ;
Rose never blew that equal'd such a
bud.
Stafford. Pray you go on.
Bagenhall. She came upon the scaf-
fold,
And said she was condemn'd to die
for treason ;
She had but follow'd the device of
those
Her nearest kin : she thought they
knew the laws.
But for herself, she knew but little law,
And nothing of the titles to the
crown ;
She had no desire for that, and wrung
her hands,
And trusted God would save her thro'
the blood
Of Jesus Christ alone.
Stafford. Pray you go on.
Bagenhall. Then knelt and said the
Miserere Mei —
But all in English, mark you ; rose
again,
And, when the headsman pray'd to be
forgiven,
Said " You will give me my true crown
at last,
But do it quickly ; " then all wept but
she,
Who changed not color when she saw
the block,
But ask'd him, childlike : " Will you
take it off
Before I lay me down ? " " No,
madam," he said,
Gasping ; and when her innocent eyes
were bound,
She, with her poor blind hands feel-
ing — " where is it ?
Where is it ? " — You must fancy that
which follow'd,
If you have heart to do it !
Crowd (in the distance). God save
their Graces !
Stafford. Their Graces, our dis-
graces ! God confound them !

Why, she's grown bloodier! when I last was here,
This was against her conscience — would be murder!

Bagenhall. The "Thou shalt do no murder," which God's hand Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd out pale —

She could not make it white — and over that, Traced in the blackest text of Hell — "Thou shalt!" And sign'd it — Mary!

Stafford. Philip and the Pope Must have sign'd too. I hear this Legate's coming

To bring us absolution from the Pope. The Lords and Commons will bow down before him — You are of the house? what will you do, Sir Ralph?

Bagenhall. And why should I be bolder than the rest, Or honester than all?

Stafford. But, sir, if I — And oversea they say this state of yours

Hath no more mortice than a tower of cards; And that a puff would do it — then if I

And others made that move I touch'd upon,

Back'd by the power of France, and landing here, Came with a sudden splendor, shout, and show,

And dazzled men and deafen'd by some bright

Loud venture, and the people so unquiet —

And I the race of murder'd Buckingham —

Not for myself, but for the kingdom — Sir,

I trust that you would fight along with us.

Bagenhall. No; you would fling your lives into the gulf.

Stafford. But if this Philip, as he's like to do,

Left Mary a wife-widow here alone,

Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads hither To seize upon the forts and fleet, and make us A Spanish province; would you not fight then?

Bagenhall. I think I should fight then.

Stafford. I am sure of it. Hist! there's the face coming on here of one Who knows me. I must leave you. Fare you well, You'll hear of me again.

Bagenhall. Upon the scaffold. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.— ROOM IN WHITEHALL PALACE.

MARY. Enter PHILIP and CARDINAL POLE.

Pole. Ave Maria, gratia plena, Benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Mary. Loyal and royal cousin, humblest thanks. Had you a pleasant voyage up the river?

Pole. We had your royal barge, and that same chair, Or rather throne of purple, on the deck. Our silver cross sparkled before the prow,

The ripples twinkled at their diamond-dance, The boats that follow'd, were as glowing-gay

As regal gardens; and your flocks of swans,

As fair and white as angels; and your shores

Wore in mine eyes the green of Paradise.

My foreign friends, who dream'd us blanketed

In ever-closing fog, were much amazed To find as fair a sun as might have flash'd

Upon their lake of Garda, fire the Thames;

Our voyage by sea was all but miracle,

And here the river flowing from the sea,
Not toward it (for they thought not of our tides),
Seem'd as a happy miracle to make glide—
In quiet—home your banish'd countryman.

Mary. We heard that you were sick in Flanders, cousin.

Pole. A dizziness.

Mary. And how came you round again?

Pole. The scarlet thread of Rahab saved her life;

And mine, a little letting of the blood.

Mary. Well? now?

Pole. Ay, cousin, as the heathen giant Had but to touch the ground, his force return'd—

Thus, after twenty years of banishment,

Feeling my native land beneath my foot,

I said thereto. "Ah, native land of mine,

Thou art much beholden to this foot of mine,

That hastest with full commission from the Pope

To absolve thee from thy guilt of heresy.

Thou hast disgraced me and attainted me,

And mark'd me ev'n as Cain, and I return

As Peter, but to bless thee: make me well."

Methinks the good land heard me, for to-day

My heart beats twenty, when I see you, cousin.

Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's death,

How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's gate!

And Mary would have risen and let him in,

But, Mary, there were those within the house

Who would not have it.

Mary. True, good cousin Pole; And there were also those without the house Who would not have it.

Pole. I believe so, cousin. State-policy and church-policy are conjoint, But Janus-faces looking diverse ways. I fear the Emperor much misvalued me.

But all is well; 'twas ev'n the will of God, Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd, now, Makes me his mouth of holy greeting. "Hail, Daughter of God, and saver of the faith,

Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui!"

Mary. Ah, heaven!

Pole. Unwell, your Grace?

Mary. No, cousin, happy— Happy to see you; never yet so happy Since I was crown'd.

Pole. Sweet cousin, you forget That long low minster where you gave your hand To this great Catholic King.

Philip. Well said, Lord Legate.

Mary. Nay, not well said; I thought of you my liege, Ev'n as I spoke.

Philip. Ay, Madam; my Lord Paget Waits to present our Council to the Legate.

Sit down here, all; Madam, between us you.

Pole. Lo, now you are enclosed with boards of cedar, Our little sister of the Song of Songs! You are doubly feheed and shielded sitting here

Between the two most high-set thrones on earth,

The Emperor's highness happily symbol'd by

The King your husband, the Pope's Holiness

By mine own self.

Mary. True, cousin, I am happy. When will you that we summon both our houses

To take this absolution from your lips,
And be regather'd to the Papal fold !

Pole. In Britain's calendar the
brightest day
Beheld our rough forefathers break
their Gods,
And clasp the faith in Christ ; but
after that
Might not St. Andrew's be her hap-
piest day ?

Mary. Then these shall meet upon
St. Andrew's day.

Enter PAGET, who presents the Council.
Dumb show.

Pole. I am an old man wearied with
my journey,
Ev'n with my joy. Permit me to withdraw.

To Lambeth ?

Philip. Ay, Lambeth has ousted
Cranmer.

It was not meet the heretic swine
should live

In Lambeth.

Mary. There or anywhere, or at all.
Philip. We have had it swept and
garnish'd after him.

Pole. Not for the seven devils to
enter in ?

Philip. No, for we trust they parted
in the swine.

Pole. True, and I am the Angel of
the Pope.

Farewell, your Graces.

Philip. Nay, not here — to me;
I will go with you to the waterside.

Pole. Not be my Charon to the
counter side ?

Philip. No, my Lord Legate, the
Lord Chancellor goes.

Pole. And unto no dead world ; but
Lambeth palace,

Henceforth a centre of the living faith.
[*Exeunt Philip, Pole, Paget, etc.*

Manet Mary.

Mary. He hath awaked ! he hath
awaked !

He stirs within the darkness !

Oh, Philip, husband ! now thy love to
mine

Will cling more close, and those bleak
manners thaw,
That make me shamed and tongue-
tied in my love.

The second Prince of Peace —
The great unborn defender of the
Faith,
Who will avenge me of mine ene-
mies —

He comes, and my star rises.
The stormy Wyatts and Northumber-
lands,

The proud ambitions of Elizabeth,
And all her fieriest partisans — are
pale

Before my star !
The light of this new learning wanes
and dies :

The ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius
fade

Into the deathless hell which is their
doom

Before my star !
His sceptre shall go forth from Ind
to Ind !

His sword shall hew the heretic peo-
ples down !

His faith shall clothe the world that
will be his,

Like universal air and sunshine ! Open,
Ye everlasting gates ! The King is
here ! —

My star, my son !

Enter PHILIP, DUKE OF ALVA, etc.

Oh, Philip, come with me ;
Good news have I to tell you, news to
make

Both of us happy — ay, the Kingdom
too.

Nay come with me — one moment !

Philip (*to Alva*). More than that :
There was one here of late — William
the Silent

They call him — he is free enough in
talk,

But tells me nothing. You will be,
we trust,

Sometime the viceroy of those
provinces —

He must deserve his surname better.

Alva. Ay, sir;
Inherit the Great Silence.

Philip. True; the provinces
Are hard to rule and must be hardly
ruled;
Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty
rind,
All hollow'd outwith stinging heresies;
And for their heresies, Alva, they will
fight;
You must break them or they break
you.

Alva (proudly). The first.
Philip. Good!
Well, Madam, this new happiness of
mine? [Exeunt.

Enter THREE PAGES.

First Page. News, mates! a miracle,
a miracle! news!
The bell must ring; Te Deums must
be sung;
The Queen hath felt the motion of her
babe!

Second Page. Ay; but see here!
First Page. See what?
Second Page. This paper, Dickon.
I found it fluttering at the palace
gates:—
“The Queen of England is delivered
of a dead dog!”

Third Page. These are the things
that madden her. Fie upon it!
First Page. Ay; but I hear she
hath a dropsy, lad,
Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.

Third Page. Fie on her dropsy, so
she have a dropsy!

I know that she was ever sweet to me.
First Page. For thou and thine are
Roman to the core.

Third Page. So thou and thine must
be. Take heed!

First Page. Not I,
And whether this flash of news be
false or true,
So the wine run, and there be revelry,
Content am I. Let all the steeples
clash,
Till the sun dance, as upon Easter Day.
[Exeunt.

SCENE III.—GREAT HALL IN
WHITEHALL.

At the far end a dais. On this three
chairs, two under one canopy for MARY
and PHILIP, another on the right of
these for POLE. Under the dais on
POLE's side, ranged along the wall, sit
all the Spiritual Peers, and along the
wall opposite, all the Temporal. The
Commons on cross benches in front, a
line of approach to the dais between
them. In the foreground, SIR RALPH
BAGENHALL and other Members of
the Commons.

First Member. St. Andrew's day;
sit close, sit close, we are friends.
Is reconciled the word? the Pope
again?

It must be thus; and yet, cocksbody!
how strange
That Gardiner, once so one with all of us
Against this foreign marriage, should
have yielded

So utterly!—strange! but stranger
still that he,

So fierce against the Headship of the
Pope,
Should play the second actor in this
pageant
That brings him in; such a cameleon
he!

Second Member. This Gardiner
turn'd his coat in Henry's time;
The serpent that hath slough'd will
slough again.

Third Member. Tut, then we all are
serpents.

Second Member. Speak for yourself.

Third Member. Ay, and for Gar-
diner! being English citizen,
How should he bear a bridegroom
out of Spain?

The Queen would have him! being
English churchman
How should he bear the headship of
the Pope?

The Queen would have it! Statesmen
that are wise

Shape a necessity, as a sculptor clay,
To their own model.

Second Member. Statesmen that are wise
Take truth herself for model. What say you? [To Sir Ralph Bagenhall.

Bagenhall. We talk and talk.

First Member. Ay, and what use to talk?

Philip's no sudden alien—the Queen's husband,
He's here, and king, or will be—yet cocksbody!
So hated here! I watch'd a hive of late;

My seven-years' friend was with me, my young boy;
Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm behind.
“ Philip!” says he. I had to cuff the rogue

For infant treason.

Third Member. But they say that bees,
If any creeping life invade their hive Too gross to be thrust out, will build him round,
And bind him in from harming of their combs.

And Philip by these articles is bound From stirring hand or foot to wrong the realm.

Second Member. By bonds of beeswax, like your creeping thing; But your wise bees had stung him first to death.

Third Member. Hush, hush! You wrong the Chancellor: the clauses added To that same treaty which the emperor sent us Were mainly Gardiner's: that no foreigner Hold office in the household, fleet, forts, army; That if the Queen should die without a child, The bond between the kingdoms be dissolved; That Philip should not mix us any way With his French wars—

Second Member. Ay, ay, but what security,

Good sir, for this, if Philip —

Third Member. Peace—the Queen, Philip, and Pole. [All rise, and stand.

Enter MARY, PHILIP, and POLE.

[Gardiner conducts them to the three chairs of state. Philip sits on the Queen's left, Pole on her right.

Gardiner. Our short-lived sun, before his winter plunge, Laughs at the last red leaf, and Andrew's Day.

Mary. Should not this day be held in after years

More solemn than of old?

Philip. Madam, my wish Echoes your Majesty's.

Pole. It shall be so. *Gardiner.* Mine echoes both your Graces'; (aside) but the Pope —

Can we not have the Catholic church as well

Without as with the Italian? if we cannot,

Why then the Pope. My lords of the upper house, And ye, my masters, of the lower house, Do ye stand fast by that which ye resolved?

Voices. We do. *Gardiner.* And be you all one mind to supplicate

The Legate here for pardon, and acknowledge

The primacy of the Pope?

Voices. We are all one mind. *Gardiner.* Then must I play the vassal to this Pole. [Aside.

[He draws a paper from under his robes and presents it to the King and Queen, who look through it and return it to him; then ascends a tribune, and reads.

We, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, And Commons here in Parliament assembled, Presenting the whole body of this realm

Of England, and dominions of the same,
 Do make most humble suit unto your Majesties,
 In our own name and that of all the state,
 That by your gracious means and intercession
 Our supplication be exhibited
 To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here as Legate
 From our most Holy Father Julius, Pope,
 And from the Apostolic see of Rome ;
 And do declare, our penitence and grief
 For our long schism and disobedience,
 Either in making laws and ordinances
 Against the Holy Father's primacy,
 Or else by doing or by speaking aught
 Which might impugn or prejudice the same ;
 By this our supplication promising,
 As well for our own selves as all the realm,
 That now we be and ever shall be quick,
 Under and with your Majesties' authorities,
 To do to the utmost all that in us lies
 Towards the abrogation and repeal
 Of all such laws and ordinances made ;
 Whereon we humbly pray your Majesties,
 As persons undefiled with our offence,
 So to set forth this humble suit of ours
 That we the rather by your intercession
 May from the Apostolic see obtain,
 Thro' this most reverend Father, absolution,
 And full release from danger of all censures
 Of Holy Church that we be fall'n into,
 So that we may, as children penitent,
 Be once again received into the bosom
 And unity of Universal Church ;
 And that this noble realm thro' after years
 May in this unity and obedience
 Unto the holy see and reigning Pope
 Serve God and both your Majesties.

Voices. Amen. [All sit.]
[He again presents the petition to the King and Queen, who hand it reverentially to Pole.]
 Pole (sitting). This is the loveliest day that ever smiled
 On England. All her breath should, incenselike,
 Rise to the heavens in grateful praise of Him
 Who now recalls her to His ancient fold.
 Lo ! once again God to this realm hath given
 A token of His more especial Grace ;
 For as this people were the first of all
 The islands call'd into the dawning church
 Out of the dead, deep night of heathendom,
 So now are these the first whom God hath given
 Grace to repent and sorrow for their schism ;
 And if your penitence be not mockery,
 Oh how the blessed angels who rejoice
 Over one saved do triumph at this hour
 In the reborn salvation of a land
 So noble. [A pause.]
 For ourselves we do protest
 That our commission is to heal, not harm ;
 We come not to condemn, but reconcile ;
 We come not to compel, but call again ;
 We come not to destroy, but edify ;
 Nor yet to question things already done ;
 These are forgiven — matters of the past —
 And range with jetsam and with offal thrown
 Into the blind sea of forgetfulness. [A pause.]
 Ye have reversed the attainder laid on us
 By him who sack'd the house of God ;
 and we,
 Amplier than any field on our poor earth.
 Can render thanks in fruit for being sown,

Do here and now repay you sixty-fold,
A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-fold,

With heaven for earth.

[*Rising and stretching forth his hands. All kneel but Sir Ralph Bagenhall, who rises and remains standing.*

The Lord who hath redeem'd us
With His own blood, and wash'd us
from our sins,
To purchase for Himself a stainless
bride;

He, whom the Father hath appointed
Head
Of all his church, He by His mercy
absolve you! [*At pause.*]

And we by that authority Apostolic
Given unto us, his Legate, by the Pope,
Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius,
God's Vicar and Vicegerent upon
earth,

Do here absolve you and deliver you
And every one of you, and all the
realm

And its dominions from all heresy,
All schism, and from all and every
censure,

Judgment, and pain accruing there-
upon;

And also we restore you to the bosom
And unity of Universal Church.

[*Turning to Gardiner.*
Our letters of commission will declare
this plainlier.

[*Queen heard sobbing. Cries of Amen! Amen! Some of the Members embrace one another.
All but Sir Ralph Bagenhall pass out into the neighboring chapel, whence is heard the Te Deum.*

Bagenhall. We strove against the
papacy from the first,
In William's time, in our first Edward's time,
And in my master Henry's time; but
now,
The unity of Universal Church,
Mary would have it; and this Gardi-
ner follows;
The unity of Universal Hell,

Philip would have it; and this Gardi-
ner follows!

A Parliament of imitative apes!
Sheep at the gap which Gardiner
takes, who not
Believes the Pope, nor any of them
believe—

These spaniel-Spaniard English of the
time,
Who rub their fawning noses in the
dust.

For that is Philip's gold-dust, and adore
This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I
had been
Born Spaniard! I had held my head
up then.

I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall,
English.

Enter Officer.

Officer. Sir Ralph Bagenhall!
Bagenhall. What of that?

Officer. You were the one sole man
in either house

Who stood upright when both the
houses fell.

Bagenhall. The houses fell!

Officer. I mean the houses knelt
Before the Legate.

Bagenhall. Do not scrimp your
phrase,
But stretch it wider; say when Eng-
land fell.

Officer. I say you were the one sole
man who stood.

Bagenhall. I am the one sole man
in either house,
Perchance in England, loves her like
a son.

Officer. Well, you one man, because
you stood upright,
Her Grace the Queen commands you
to the Tower.

Bagenhall. As traitor, or as heretic,
or for what?

Officer. If any man in any way
would be

The one man, he shall be soto his cost.

Bagenhall. What! will she have
my head?

Officer. A round fine likelier.
Your pardon. [*Calling to Attendant.*
By the river to the Tower. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—WHITEHALL. A ROOM
IN THE PALACE.MARY, GARDINER, POLE, PAGET,
BONNER, etc.

Mary. The King and I, my Lords, now that all traitors Against our royal state have lost the heads Wherewith they plotted in their treasonous malice, Have talk'd together, and are well agreed That those old statutes touching Lollardism To bring the heretic to the stake, should be No longer a dead letter, but requicken'd.

One of the Council. Why, what hath fluster'd Gardiner? how he rubs His forelock!

Paget. I have changed a word with him In coming, and may change a word again.

Gardiner. Madam, your Highness is our sun, the King And you together our two suns in one; And so the beams of both may shine upon us, The faith that seem'd to droop will feel your light, Lift head, and flourish; yet not light alone,

There must be heat—there must be heat enough To scorch and wither heresy to the root.

For what saith Christ? “Compel them to come in.” And what saith Paul? “I would they were cut off That trouble you.” Let the dead letter live!

Trace it in fire, that all the louts to whom

Their A B C is darkness, clowns and grooms

May read it! so you quash rebellion too,

For heretic and traitor are all one: Two vipers of one breed—an amphisbaena,

Each end a sting: Let the dead letter burn!

Paget. Yet there be some disloyal Catholics,

And many heretics loyal; heretic throats

Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady Jane,

But shouted in Queen Mary. So there be Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and cord.

To take the lives of others that are loyal,

And by the churchman's pitiless doom of fire,

Were but a thankless policy in the crown,

Ay, and against itself; for there are many.

Mary. If we could burn out heresy, my Lord Paget,

We reck not tho' we lost this crown of England—

Ay! tho' it were ten Englands!

Gardiner. Right, your Grace, Paget, you are all for this poor life of ours,

And care but little for the life to be.

Paget. I have some time, for curioseness, my Lord, Watch'd children playing at their life to be, And cruel at it, killing helpless flies; Such is our time—all times for aught I know.

Gardiner. We kill the heretics that sting the soul— They, with right reason, flies that prick the flesh.

Paget. They had not reach'd right reason; little children! They kill'd but for their pleasure and the power

They felt in killing.

Gardiner. A spice of Satan, ha! Why, good! what then? granted!— we are fallen creatures;

Look to your Bible, Paget! we are fallen.

Paget. I am but of the laity, my Lord Bishop,
And may not read your Bible, yet I found
One day, a wholesome scripture,
"Little children,
Love one another."

Gardiner. Did you find a scripture,
"I come not to bring peace but a sword"? The sword
Is in her Grace's hand to smite with.

Paget,
You stand up here to fight for heresy,
You are more than guess'd at as a heretic,
And on the steep-up track of the true faith
Your lapses are far seen.

Paget. The faultless Gardiner!
Mary. You brawl beyond the question; speak, Lord Legate!

Pole. Indeed, I cannot follow with your Grace:
Rather would say—the shepherd doth not kill
The sheep that wander from his flock, but sends
His careful dog to bring them to the fold.
Look to the Netherlands, wherein have been
Such holocausts of heresy! to what end?
For yet the faith is not established there.

Gardiner. The end's not come.
Pole. No—nor this way will come,
Seeing there lie two ways to every end,
A better and a worse—the worse is here
To persecute, because to persecute
Makes a faith hated, and is furthermore
No perfect witness of a perfect faith
In him who persecutes: when men are
tost
On tides of strange opinion, and not sure

Of their own selves, they are wroth with their own selves,
And thence with others; then, who lights the faggot?
Not the full faith, no, but the lurking doubt.
Old Rome, that first made martyrs in the Church,
Trembled for her own gods, for these were trembling—
But when did our Rome tremble?

Paget. Did she not in Henry's time and Edward's?
Pole. What, my Lord! The Church on Peter's rock? never!
I have seen

A pine in Italy that cast its shadow
Athwart a cataract; firm stood the pine—
The cataract shook the shadow. To my mind,
The cataract typed the headlong plunge and fall
Of heresy to the pit: the pine was Rome.

You see, my Lords,
It was the shadow of the Church that trembled;
Your church was but the shadow of a church;

Wanting the Papal mitre.
Gardiner (muttering). Here be tropes.
Pole. And tropes are good to clothe a naked truth,

And make it look more seemly.
Gardiner. Tropes again!

Pole. You are hard to please. Then without tropes, my Lord,
An overmuch severeness, I repeat,
When faith is wavering makes the waverer pass

Into more settled hatred of the doctrines
Of those who rule, which hatred by and by
Involves the ruler (thus there springs to light
That Centaur of a monstrous Commonweal,
The traitor-heretic) then tho' some may quail,

Yet others are that dare the stake and fire,
And their strong torment bravely borne, begets
An admiration and an indignation,
And hot desire to imitate; so the plague
Of schism spreads; were there but three or four
Of these misleaders, yet I would not say
Burn! and we cannot burn whole towns; they are many,
As my Lord Paget says.

Gardiner. Yet my Lord Cardinal —
Pole. I am your Legate; please you let me finish.
Methinks that under our Queen's regimen
We might go softlier than with crimson rowel
And streaming lash. When Herod-Henry first
Began to batter at your English Church,
This was the cause, and hence the judgment on her.
She seethed with such adulteries, and the lives
Of many among your churchmen were so foul
That heaven wept and earth blush'd.
I would advise
That we should thoroughly cleanse the Church within
Before these bitter statutes be requicken'd.
So after that when she once more is seen
White as the light, the spotless bride of Christ,
Like Christ himself on Tabor, possibly
The Lutheran may be won to her again;
Till when, my Lords, I counsel tolerance.
Gardiner. What, if a mad dog bit your hand, my Lord,
Would you not chop the bitten finger off,
Lest your whole body should madden with the poison?

I would not, were I Queen, tolerate the heretic,
No, not an hour. The ruler of a land
Is bounden by his power and place to see
His people be not poison'd. Tolerate them!
Why? do they tolerate you? Nay, many of them
Would burn — have burnt each other; call they not
The one true faith, a loathsome idol-worship?
Beware, Lord Legate, of a heavier crime
Than heresy is itself; beware, I say,
Lest men accuse you of indifference
To all faiths, all religion; for you know
Right well that you yourself have been supposed
Tainted with Lutheranism it Italy.
Pole (angered). But you, my Lord, beyond all supposition,
In clear and open day were congruent
With that vile Cranmer in the accursed lie
Of good Queen Catherine's divorce — the spring
Of all those evils that have flow'd upon us;
For you yourself have truckled to the tyrant,
And done your best to bastardize our Queen,
For which God's righteous judgment fell upon you
In your five years of imprisonment, my Lord,
Under young Edward. Who so bolster'd up
The gross King's headship of the Church, or more
Denied the Holy Father!
Gardiner. Ha! what! eh?
But you, my Lord, a polish'd gentleman,
A bookman, flying from the heat and tussle,
You lived among your vines and oranges,

In your soft Italy yonder ! You were sent for,
You were appeal'd to, but you still preferr'd
Your learned leisure. As for what I did
I suffer'd and repented. You, Lord Legate
And Cardinal-Deacon, have not now to learn
That ev'n St. Peter in his time of fear
Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my Lord.

Pole. But not for five-and-twenty years, my Lord.
Gardiner. Ha ! good ! it seems then I was summon'd hither
But to be mock'd and baited. Speak, friend Bonner,
And tell this learned Legate he lacks zeal.
The Church's evil is not as the King's,
Cannot be heal'd by stroking. The mad bite
Must have the cautery — tell him — and at once.
What wouldst thou do hadst thou his power, thou
That layest so long in heretic bonds with me ;
Wouldst thou not burn and blast them root and branch ?

Bonner. Ay, after you, my Lord.
Gardiner. Nay, God's passion, before me ! speak !

Bonner. I am on fire until I see them flame.
Gardiner. Ay, the psalm-singing weavers, cobblers, scum —
But this most noble prince Plantagenet,
Our good Queen's cousin — dallying over seas
Even when his brother's, nay, his noble mother's,
Head fell —

Pole. Peace, madman ! Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst not fathom.
Thou Christian Bishop, thou Lord Chancellor

Of England ! no more rein upon thine anger
Than any child ! Thou mak'st me much ashamed
That I was for a moment wroth at thee *Mary.* I come for counsel and ye give me feuds,
Like dogs that set to watch their master's gate,
Fall, when the thief is ev'n within the walls,
To worrying one another. My Lord Chancellor,
You have an old trick of offending us ;
And but that you are art and part with us
In purging heresy, well we might, for this
Your violence and much roughness to the Legate,
Have shut you from our counsels.
Cousin Pole,
You are fresh from brighter lands.
Retire with me.
His Highness and myself (so you allow us)
Will let you learn in peace and privacy
What power this cooler sun of England hath
In breeding godless vermin. And pray Heaven
That you may see according to our sight.
Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt Queen and Pole, etc.*
Gardiner. Pole has the Plantagenet face,
But not the force made them our mightiest kings.
Fine eyes — but melancholy, irresolute —
A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine beard.
But a weak mouth, an indeterminate — ha ?

Bonner. Well, a weak mouth, perchance.
Gardiner. And not like thine
To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or raw.

Bonner. I'd do my best, my Lord;
but yet the Legate
Is here as Pope and Master of the
Church,

And if he go not with you —

Gardiner. Tut, Master Bishop,
Our bashful Legate, saw'st not how he
flush'd?

Touch him upon his old heretical
talk,
He'll burn a diocese to prove his or-
thodoxy.

And let him call me truckler. In
those times,

Thou knowest we had to dodge, or
duck, or die;

I kept my head for use of Holy
Church;

And see you, we shall have to dodge
again,

And let the Pope trample our rights,
and plunge

His foreign fist into our island Church
To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.
For a time, for a time.

Why? that these statutes may be put
in force,

And that his fan may thoroughly
purge his floor.

Bonner. So then you hold the
Pope —

Gardiner. I hold the Pope!
What do I hold him? what do I hold
the Pope?

Come, come, the morsel stuck — this
Cardinal's fault —

I have gulpt it down. I am wholly
for the Pope,

Utterly and altogether for the Pope,
The Eternal Peter of the changeless
chair,

Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred
king of kings,

God upon earth! what more? what
would you have?

Hence, let's be gone.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Well that you be not gone,
My lord. The Queen, most wroth at
first with you,

Is now content to grant you full for-
giveness,
So that you crave full pardon of the
Legate.

I am sent to fetch you.

Gardiner. Doth Pole yield, sir,
ha!

Did you hear 'em? were you by?
Usher. I cannot tell you,

His bearing is so courtly-delicate;
And yet methinks he falters: their
two Graces

Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin
him,

So press on him the duty which as
Legate

He owes himself, and with such royal
smiles —

Gardiner. Smiles that burn men.
Bonner, it will be carried.

He falters, ha? 'fore God, we change
and change;

Men now are bow'd and old, the doc-
tors tell you,

At three-score years; then if we
change at all

We needs must do it quickly; it is an
age

Of brief life, and brief purpose, and
brief patience,

As I have shown to-day. I am sorry
for it

If Pole be like to turn. Our old
friend Cranmer,

Your more especial love, hath turn'd
so often,

He knows not where he stands, which,
if this pass,

We two shall have to teach him; let
'em look to it,

Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and
Latimer,

Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is
come,

Their hour is hard at hand, their
“dies Iræ,”

Their “dies Illa,” which will test
their sect.

I feel it but a duty — you will find in
it

Pleasure as well as duty, worthy
Bonner, —

To test their sect. Sir, I attend the Queen
To crave most humble pardon — of her most Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-cousin,
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—WOODSTOCK.

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING.

Elizabeth. So they have sent poor Courtenay over sea.

Lady. And banish'd us to Woodstock, and the fields.

The colors of our Queen are green and white,
These fields are only green, they make me gape.

Elizabeth. There's whitethorn, girl.

Lady. Ay, for an hour in May. But court is always May, buds out in masques,
Breaks into feather'd merriments, and flowers

In silken pageants. Why do they keep us here?

Why still suspect your Grace?

Elizabeth. Hard upon both.
[*Writes on the window with a diamond.*

Much suspected, of me
Nothing proven can be.
Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

Lady. What hath your Highness written?

Elizabeth. A true rhyme.

Lady. Cut with a diamond; so to last like truth.

Elizabeth. Ay, if truth last.

Lady. But truth, they say, will out, So it must last. It is not like a word, That comes and goes in uttering.

Elizabeth. Truth, a word! The very Truth and very Word are one.

But truth of story, which I glanced at, girl, Is like a word that comes from olden days, And passes thro' the peoples: every tongue

Alters it passing, till it spells and speaks

Quite other than at first.

Lady. I do not follow.

Elizabeth. How many names in the long sweep of time

That so foreshortens greatness, may but hang

On the chance mention of some fool that once

Brake bread with us, perhaps: and my poor chronicle

Is but of glass. Sir Henry Bedingfield

May split it for a spite.

Lady. God grant it last, And witness to your Grace's innocence, Till doomsday melt it.

Elizabeth. Or a second fire, Like that which lately crackled underfoot

And in this very chamber, fuse the glass, And char us back again into the dust We spring from. Never peacock against rain

Scream'd as you did for water.

Lady. And I got it. I woke Sir Henry — and he's true to you —

I read his honest horror in his eyes.

Elizabeth. Or true to you?

Lady. Sir Henry Bedingfield! I will have no man true to me, your Grace,

But one that pares his nails; to me? the clown!

Elizabeth. Out, girl! you wrong a noble gentleman.

Lady. For, like his cloak, his manners want the nap

And gloss of court; but of this fire he says,

Nay swears, it was no wicked wilfulness,

Only a natural chance.

Elizabeth. A chance — perchance One of those wicked wilfuls that men make,

Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I know

They hunt my blood. Save for my daily range

Among the pleasant fields of Holy
Writ
I might despair. But there hath
some one come ;
The house is all in movement. Hence,
and see. [Exit Lady.]

Milkmaid (singing without).

Shame upon you, Robin,
Shame upon you now !
Kiss me would you ? with my hands
Milking the cow ?
Daisies grow again,
Kingcups blow again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.
Robin came behind me,
Kiss'd me well I vow ;
Cuff him could I ? with my hands
Milking the cow ?
Swallows fly again,
Cuckoos cry again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.
Come, Robin, Robin,
Come and kiss me now ;
Help it can I ? with my hands
Milking the cow ?
Ringdoves coo again,
All things woo again.
Come behind and kiss me milking the cow !

Elizabeth. Right honest and red-cheek'd; Robin was violent,
And she was crafty — a sweet violence,
And a sweet craft. I would I were a milkmaid,
To sing, love, marry, churn, brew,
bake, and die,
Then have my simple headstone by the church,
And all things lived and ended honestly.
I could not if I would. I am Harry's daughter :
Gardiner would have my head. They are not sweet,
The violence and the craft that do divide
The world of nature ; what is weak must lie ;
The lion needs but roar to guard his young ;
The lapwing lies, says "here" when they are there.
Threaten the child ; "I'll scourge you if you did it ;"

What weapon hath the child, save his soft tongue,
To say "I did not ?" and my rod's the block.
I never lay my head upon the pillow
But that I think, "Wilt thou lie there to-morrow ?"
How oft the falling axe, that never fell,
Hath shock'd me back into the daylight truth
That it may fall to-day ! Those damp, black, dead
Nights in the Tower ; dead — with the fear of death
Too dead ev'n for a death-watch !
Toll of a bell,
Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a rat
Affrighted me, and then delighted me,
For there was life — And there was life in death —
The little murder'd princes, in a pale light,
Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd, "come away !"
The civil wars are gone for evermore :
Thou last of all the Tudors, come away !
With us is peace !" The last ? It was a dream ;
I must not dream, not wink, but watch.
She has gone,
Maid Marian to her Robin — by and by
Both happy ! a fox may flinch a hen by night,
And make a morning outcry in the yard ;
But there's no Renard here to "catch her tripping."
Catch me who can ; yet, sometime I have wish'd
That I were caught, and kill'd away at once
Out of the flutter. The gray rogue, Gardiner,
Went on his knees, and pray'd me to confess
In Wyatt's business, and to cast myself

Upon the good Queen's mercy ; ay,
when, my Lord ?
God save the Queen ! My jailor —

Enter SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

Bedingfield. One, whose bolts,
That jail you from free life, bar you
from death.

There haunt some Papist ruffians
here about
Would murder you.

Elizabeth. I thank you heartily, sir,
But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,
And God hath blest or cursed me with
a nose —

Your boots are from the horses.

Bedingfield. Ay, my Lady.
When next there comes a missive
from the Queen
It shall be all my study for one hour
To rose and lavender my harsiness,
Before I dare to glance upon your
Grace.

Elizabeth. A missive from the
Queen : last time she wrote,
I had like to have lost my life : it
takes my breath :
O God, sir, do you look upon your
boots,
Are you so small a man ? Help me :
what think you,
Is it life or death ?

Bedingfield. I thought not on my
boots ;
The devil take all boots were ever
made
Since man went barefoot. See, I lay
it here,
For I will come no nearer to your
Grace ;

[Laying down the letter.
And, whether it bring you bitter news
or sweet,
And God hath given your grace a
nose, or not,

I'll help you, if I may.

Elizabeth. Your pardon, then ;
It is the heat and narrowness of the
cage
That makes the captive testy ; with
free wing

The world were all one Araby. Leave
me now,
Will you, companion to myself, sir ?
Bedingfield. Will I ?
With most exceeding willingness, I
will ;
You know I never come till I be call'd.

[Exit.]

Elizabeth. It lies there folded : is
there venom in it ?
A snake — and if I touch it, it may
sting.
Come, come, the worst !
Best wisdom is to know the worst at
once. [Reads :

"It is the King's wish, that
you should wed Prince Philibert of
Savoy. You are to come to Court on
the instant ; and think of this in your
coming.

"MARY THE QUEEN."

Think ! I have many thoughts ;
I think there may be birdlime here for
me ;
I think they fain would have me from
the realm ;
I think the Queen may never bear a
child ;
I think that I may be some time the
Queen,
Then, Queen indeed : no foreign prince
or priest
Should fill my throne, myself upon
the steps.

I think I will not marry anyone,
Specially not this landless Philibert
Of Savoy ; but, if Philip menace me,
I think that I will play with Phili-
bert, —
As once the Holy Father did with
mine,
Before my father married my good
mother, —
For fear of Spain.

Enter LADY.

Lady. O Lord ! your Grace, your
Grace,
I feel so happy : it seems that we shall
fly

These bald, blank fields, and dance
into the sun
That shines on princes.

Elizabeth. Yet, a moment since,
I wish'd myself the milkmaid singing
here,
To kiss and cuff among the birds and
flowers —

A right rough life and healthful.

Lady. But the wench
Hath her own troubles; she is weep-
ing now;
For the wrong Robin took her at her
word.
Then the cow kick'd, and all her milk
was spilt.

Your highness such a milkmaid?

Elizabeth. I had kept
My Robins and my cows in sweeter
order
Had I been such.

Lady (slyly). And had your Grace
a Robin?

Elizabeth. Come, come, you are
chill here; you want the sun
That shines at court; make ready for
the journey.

Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke.
Ready at once. [Exit.]

SCENE VI.—LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

**LORD PETRE and LORD WILLIAM
HOWARD.**

Petre. You cannot see the Queen.
Renard denied her,
Ev'n now to me.

Howard. Their Flemish go-between
And all-in-all. I came to thank her
Majesty
For freeing my friend Bagenhall
from the Tower;
A grace to me! Mercy, that herb-of-
grace,
Flowers now but seldom.

Petre. Only now perhaps.
Because the Queen hath been three
days in tears
For Philip's going — like the wild
hedge-rose

Of a soft winter, possible, not prob-
able,
However you have prov'n it.

Howard. I must see her.

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My Lords, you cannot see
her Majesty.

Howard. Why then the King! for
I would have him bring it
Home to the leisure wisdom of his
Queen,
Before he go, that since these statutes
past,
Gardiner out-Gardiners Gardiner in
his heat,
Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own
self —
Beast! — but they play with fire as
children do,
And burn the house. I know that
these are breeding
A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in
men

Against the King, the Queen, the
Holy Father,

The faith itself. Can I not see him?

Renard. Not now.
And in all this, my Lord, her Majesty
Is flint of flint, you may strike fire
from her,
Not hope to melt her. I will give
your message.

[Exit Petre and Howard.]

Enter PHILIP (musing).

Philip. She will not have Prince
Philibert of Savoy,
I talk'd with her in vain — says she
will live
And die true maid — a goodly crea-
ture too.
Would she had been the Queen! yet
she must have him;
She troubles England: that she
breathes in England
Is life and lungs to every rebel birth
That passes out of embryo.

Simon Renard! —
This Howard, whom they fear, what
was he saying?

Renard. What your imperial father said, my liege,
To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardiner burns,
And Bonner burns; and it would seem
this people
Care more for our brief life in their
wet land,
Than yours in happier Spain. I told
my Lord
He should not vex her Highness; she
would say
These are the means God works with,
that His church
May flourish.

Philip. Ay, sir, but in statesmanship
To strike too soon is oft to miss the
blow.
Thou knowest I bade my chaplain,
Castro, preach
Against these burnings.
Renard. And the Emperor
Approved you, and when last he wrote,
declared
His comfort in your Grace that you
were bland
And affable to men of all estates,
In hope to charm them from their
hate of Spain.

Philip. In hope to crush all heresy
under Spain.
But, Renard, I am sicker staying here
Than any sea could make me passing
hence,
Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea.
So sick am I with biding for this child.
Is it the fashion in this clime for
women
To go twelve months in bearing of a
child?
The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped,
they led
Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd
their bells,
Shot off their lying cannon, and her
priests
Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair
prince to come;
Till, by St. James, I find myself the
fool.
Why do you lift your eyebrow at me
thus?

Renard. I never saw your Highness
moved till now.

Philip. So weary am I of this wet
land of theirs,
And every soul of man that breathes
therein.

Renard. My liege, we must not
drop the mask before
The masquerade is over—

Philip. — Have I dropt it?
I have but shown a loathing face to
you,
Who knew it from the first.

Enter MARY.

Mary (aside). With Renard. Still
Parleying with Renard, all the day
with Renard,
And scarce a greeting all the day for
me —

And goes to-morrow. [Exit Mary.

*Philip (to Renard, who advances to
him).* Well, sir, is there more?

Renard (who has perceived the Queen).
May Simon Renard speak a
single word?

Philip. Ay.

Renard. And be forgiven for it?

Philip. Simon Renard
Knows me too well to speak a single
word

That could not be forgiven.

Renard. Well, my liege,
Your Grace hath a most chaste and
loving wife.

Philip. Why not? The Queen of
Philip should be chaste.

Renard. Ay, but, my Lord, you
know what Virgil sings,
Woman is various and most mutable.

Philip. She play the harlot! never.

Renard. No, sire, no,
Not dream'd of by the rabidest gos-
peller.

There was a paper thrown into the
palace,
"The King hath wearied of his bar-
ren bride."

She came upon it, read it, and then rent
it,
With all the rage of one who hates a
truth

He cannot but allow. Sire, I would have you —

What should I say, I cannot pick my words —

Be somewhat less — majestic to your Queen.

Philip. Am I to change my manners, Simon Renard, Because these islanders are brutal beasts ?

Or would you have me turn a soneteer,

And warble those brief-sighted eyes of hers ?

Renard. Brief-sighted tho' they be, I have seen them, sire,

When you perchance were trifling royally

With some fair dame of court, suddenly fill

With such fierce fire — had it been fire indeed

It would have burnt both speakers.

Philip. Ay, and then ?

Renard. Sire, might it not be policy in some matter

Of small importance now and then to cede

A point to her demand ?

Philip. Well, I am going.

Renard. For should her love when you are gone, my liege,

Witness these papers, there will not be wanting

Those that will urge her injury — should her love —

And I have known such women more than one —

Veer to the counterpoint, and jealousy

Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse Almost into one metal love and hate, —

And she impress her wrongs upon her Council,

And these again upon her Parliament —

We are not loved here, and would be then perhaps

Not so well holpen in our wars with France,

As else we might be — here she comes.

Enter MARY.

Mary. O Philip !

Nay, must you go indeed ?

Philip. Madam, I must.

Mary. The parting of a husband and a wife

Is like the cleaving of a heart ; one half Will flutter here, one there.

Philip. You say true, Madam.

Mary. The Holy Virgin will not have me yet

Lose the sweet hope that I may bear a prince.

If such a prince were born and you not here !

Philip. I should be here if such a prince were born.

Mary. But must you go ?

Philip. Madam, you know my father,

Retiring into clostral solitude

To yield the remnant of his years to heaven,

Will shift the yoke and weight of all the world

From off his neck to mine. We meet at Brussels.

But since mine absence will not be for long,

Your Majesty shall go to Dover with me,

And wait my coming back.

Mary. To Dover ? no, I am too feeble. I will go to Greenwich,

So you will have me with you ; and there watch

All that is gracious in the breath of heaven

Draw with your sails from our poor land, and pass

And leave me, Philip, with my prayers for you.

Philip. And doubtless I shall profit by your prayers.

Mary. Methinks that would you tarry one day more

(The news was sudden) I could mould myself

To bear your going better; will you do it ?

Philip. Madam, a day may sink or save a realm.

Mary. A day may save a heart from breaking too.

Philip. Well, Simon Renard, shall we stop a day?

Renard. Your Grace's business will not suffer, sire,

For one day more, so far as I can tell.

Philip. Then one day more to please her Majesty.

Mary. The sunshine sweeps across my life again.

O if I knew you felt this parting, Philip,

As I do!

Philip. By St. James I do protest, Upon the faith and honor of a Spaniard, I am vastly grieved to leave your Majesty.

Simon, is supper ready?

Renard. Ay, my liege, I saw the covers laying.

Philip. Let us have it. [Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

MARY, CARDINAL POLE.

Mary. What have you there?

Pole. So please your Majesty, A long petition from the foreign exiles

To spare the life of Cranmer. Bishop Thirlby,

And my Lord Paget and Lord William Howard,

Crave, in the same cause, hearing of your Grace.

Hath he not written himself—infatuated—

To sue you for his life?

Mary. His life? Oh, no; Not sued for that—he knows it were in vain.

But so much of the anti-papal leaven Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me not to sully

Mine own prerogative, and degrade the realm

By seeking justice at a stranger's hand

Against my natural subject. King and Queen,

To whom he owes his loyalty after God,

Shall these accuse him to a foreign prince?

Death would not grieve him more. I cannot be

True to this realm of England and the Pope

Together, says the heretic.

Pole. And there errs; As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity.

A secular kingdom is but as the body Lacking a soul; and in itself a beast. The Holy Father in a secular kingdom Is as the soul descending out of heaven

Into a body generate.

Mary. Write to him, then.

Pole. I will.

Mary. And sharply, Pole.

Pole. Here come the Cranmerites!

Enter THIRLBY, LORD PAGET, LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Health to your Grace! Good morrow, my Lord Cardinal;

We make our humble prayer unto your Grace

That Cranmer may withdraw to foreign parts, Or into private life within the realm. In several bills and declarations,

Madam,

He hath recanted all his heresies.

Paget. Ay, ay; if Bonner have not forged the bills. [Aside.

Mary. Did not More die, and Fisher? he must burn.

Howard. He hath recanted, Madam.

Mary. The better for him. He burns in Purgatory, not in Hell.

Howard. Ay, ay, your Grace; but it was never seen

That any one recanting thus at full,

As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on earth.

Mary. It will be seen now, then.

Thirlby. O Madam, Madam ! I thus implore you, low upon my knees,

To reach the hand of mercy to my friend.

I have err'd with him ; with him I have recanted.

What human reason is there why my friend Should meet with lesser mercy than myself ?

Mary. My Lord of Ely, this. After a riot

We hang the leaders, let their following go.

Cranmer is head and father of these heresies,

New learning as they call it ; yea, may God

Forget me at most need when I forget

Her foul divorce — my sainted mother — No ! —

Howard. Ay, ay, but mighty doctors doubted there.

The Pope himself waver'd ; and more than one

Row'd in that galley — Gardiner to wit,

Whom truly I deny not to have been Your faithful friend and trusty counsellor.

Hath not your Highness ever read his book,

His tractate upon True Obedience, Writ by himself and Bonner ?

Mary. I will take Such order with all bad, heretical books

That none shall hold them in his house and live,

Henceforward. No, my Lord.

Howard. Then never read it. The truth is here. Your father was a man

Of such colossal kinghood, yet so courteous,

Except when wroth, you scarce could meet his eye

And hold your own ; and were he wroth indeed,

You held it less, or not at all. I say, Your father had a will that beat men down;

Your father had a brain that beat men down —

Pole. Not me, my Lord.

Howard. No, for you were not here ; You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's throne ;

And it would more become you, my Lord Legate, To join a voice, so potent with her Highness,

To ours in plea for Cranmer than to stand On naked self-assertion.

Mary. All your voices Are waves on flint. The heretic must burn.

Howard. Yet once he saved your Majesty's own life ; Stood out against the King in your behalf,

At his own peril.

Mary. I know not if he did ; And if he did I care not, my Lord Howard.

My life is not so happy, no such boon, That I should spare to take a heretic priest's, Who saved it or not saved. Why do you vex me ?

Paget. Yet to save Cranmer were to serve the Church, Your Majesty's I mean ; he is effaced, Self-blotted out ; so wounded in his honor,

He can but creep down into some dark hole

Like a hurt beast, and hide himself and die ;

But if you burn him, — well, your Highness knows The saying, " Martyr's blood — seed of the Church."

Mary. Of the true Church ; but his is none, nor will be. You are too politic for me, my Lord Paget.

And if he have to live so loath'd a life,
It were more merciful to burn him now.

Thirlby. O yet relent. O, Madam, if you knew him As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious, With all his learning —

Mary. Yet a heretic still. His learning makes his burning the more just.

Thirlby. So worship't of all those that came across him; The stranger at his hearth, and all his house —

Mary. His children and his concubine, belike.

Thirlby. To do him any wrong was to beget A kindness from him, for his heart was rich, Of such fine mould, that if you sow'd therein

The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Charity.

Pole. "After his kind it costs him nothing," there's An old world English adage to the point. These are but natural graces, my good Bishop, Which in the Catholic garden are as flowers, But on the heretic dunghill only weeds.

Howard. Such weeds make dung-hills gracious.

Mary. Enough, my Lords. It is God's will, the Holy Father's will, And Philip's will, and mine, that he should burn.

He is pronounced anathema.

Howard. Farewell, Madam, God grant you ampler mercy at your call

Than you have shown to Cranmer.

[*Exeunt Lords.*

Pole. After this, Your Grace will hardly care to over-look

This same petition of the foreign exiles For Cranmer's life.

Mary. Make out the writ to-night.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—OXFORD. CRANMER IN PRISON.

Cranmer. Last night, I dream'd the faggots were alight, And that myself was fasten'd to the stake, And found it all a visionary flame, Cool as the light in old decaying wood; And then King Harry look'd from out a cloud, And bade me have good courage; and I heard An angel cry "There is more joy in Heaven," — And after that, the trumpet of the dead.

[*Trumpets without.* Why, there are trumpets blowing now: what is it?

Enter FATHER COLE.

Cole. Cranmer, I come to question you again; Have you remain'd in the true Catholic faith I left you in?

Cranmer. In the true Catholic faith, By Heaven's grace, I am more and more confirm'd. Why are the trumpets blowing, Father Cole?

Cole. Cranmer, it is decided by the Council That you to-day should read your recantation Before the people in St. Mary's Church. And there be many heretics in the town, Who loathe you for your late return to Rome, And might assail you passing through the street, And tear you piecemeal: so you have a guard.

Cranmer. Or seek to rescue me. I thank the Council.

Cole. Do you lack any money?

Cranmer. Nay, why should I ?
The prison fare is good enough for me.

Cole. Ay, but to give the poor

Cranmer. Hand it me, then !
I thank you.

Cole. For a little space, farewell ;
Until I see you in St. Mary's Church.
[Exit Cole.]

Cranmer. It is against all precedent to burn

One who recants ; they mean to pardon me.

To give the poor — they give the poor who die.

Well, burn me or not burn me I am fixt ;

It is but a communion, not a mass :
A holy supper, not a sacrifice ;

No man can make his Maker — Villa Gareia.

Enter VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. Pray you write out
this paper for me, Cranmer.

Cranmer. Have I not writ enough
to satisfy you ?

Villa Garcia. It is the last.

Cranmer. Give it me, then.
[He writes.]

Villa Garcia. Now sign.

Cranmer. I have sign'd enough,
and I will sign no more.

Villa Garcia. It is no more than
what you have sign'd already,
The public form thereof.

Cranmer. It may be so ;
I sign it with my presence, if I read it.

Villa Garcia. But this is idle of
you. Well, sir, well,

You are to beg the people to pray for
you ;

Exhort them to a pure and virtuous
life ;

Declare the Queen's right to the
throne ; confess

Your faith before all hearers ; and
retract .

That Eucharistic doctrine in your
book.

Will you not sign it now ?

Cranmer. No, Villa Garcia,

I sign no more. Will they have mercy
on me ?

Villa Garcia. Have you good hopes
of mercy ! So farewell. [Exit.]

Cranmer. Good hopes, not theirs,
have I that I am fixt,
Fixt beyond fail ; however, in strange
hours,

After the long brain-dazing colloquies,
And thousand-times recurring argu-
ment

Of those two friars ever in my prison,
When left alone in my despondency,
Without a friend, a book, my faith
would seem

Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam
heavily

Against the huge corruptions of the
Church,

Monsters of mistradition, old enough
To scare me into dreaming, "what
am I,

Cranmer, against whole ages ?" was
it so,

Or am I slandering my most inward
friend,

To veil the fault of my most outward
foe —

The soft and tremulous coward in the
flesh ?

O higher, holier, earlier, purer church,
I have found thee and not leave thee
any more.

It is but a communion, not a mass —
No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast !

(Writes.) So, so ; this will I say —
thus will I pray. [Puts up the
paper.]

Enter BONNER.

Bonner. Good day, old friend ;
what, you look somewhat worn ;
And yet it is a day to test your health
Ev'n at the best : I scarce have spoken
with you

Since when? — your degradation. At
your trial

Never stood up a bolder man than
you ;

You would not cap the Pope's com-
missioner —

Your learning, and your stoutness,
and your heresy,
Dumbfounded half of us. So, after
that,
We had to dis-archbishop and unlord,
And make you simple Cranmer once
again.
The common barber clipt your hair,
and I
Scraped from your finger-points the
holy oil;
And worse than all, you had to kneel
to me;
Which was not pleasant for you,
Master Cranmer.
Now you, that would not recognize
the Pope,
And you, that would not own the Real
Presence,
Have found a real presence in the
stake,
Which frights you back into the an-
cient faith;
And so you have recanted to the Pope.
How are the mighty fallen, Master
Cranmer!

Cranmer. You have been more
fierce against the Pope than I;
But why fling back the stone he strikes
me with? [Aside.
O Bonner, if I ever did you kindness —
Power hath been given you to try
faith by fire —
Pray you, remembering how yourself
have changed,
Be somewhat pitiful, after I have
gone,
To the poor flock — to women and to
children —
That when I was archbishop held with
me.

Bonner. Ay — gentle as they call
you — live or die!
Pitiful to this pitiful heresy?
I must obey the Queen and Council,
man.
Win thro' this day with honor to your-
self,
And I'll say something for you — so
— good-bye. [Exit.

Cranmer. This hard coarse man of
old hath crouch'd to me

Till I myself was half ashamed for
him.

Enter Thirlby.

Weep not, good Thirlby.

Thirlby. Oh, my Lord, my Lord!
My heart is no such block as Bonner's
is:

Who would not weep?

Cranmer. Why do you so my-lord
me,

Who am disgraced?

Thirlby. On earth; but saved in
heaven

By your recanting.

Cranmer. Will they burn me,
Thirlby?

Thirlby. Alas, they will; these
burnings will not help
The purpose of the faith; but my poor
voice

Against them is a whisper to the roar
Of a spring-tide.

Cranmer. And they will surely
burn me?

Thirlby. Ay; and besides, will have
you in the church

Repeat your recantation in the ears
Of all men, to the saving of their
souls,

Before your execution. May God
help you

Thro' that hard hour!

Cranmer. And may God bless you,
Thirlby!

Well, they shall hear my recantation
there. [Exit Thirlby.

Disgraced, dishonor'd! — not by them,
indeed,

By mine own self — by mine own
hand!

O thin-skinn'd hand and jutting veins,
'twas you

That sign'd the burning of poor Joan
of Kent;

But then she was a witch. You have
written much,

But you were never raised to plead
for Frith,

Whose dogmas I have reach'd: he
was deliver'd

To the secular arm to burn ; and there
was Lambert ;
Who can foresee himself ? truly these
burnings,
As Thirlby says, are profitless to the
burners,
And help the other side. You shall
burn too,
Burn first when I am burnt.
Fire — inch by inch to die in agony !
Latimer
Had a brief end — not Ridley.
Hooper burn'd
Three-quarters of an hour. Will my
faggots
Be wet as his were ? It is a day of
rain.
I will not muse upon it.
My fancy takes the burner's part, and
makes
The fire seem even crueler than it
is.
No, I not doubt that God will give
me strength,
Albeit I have denied him.

Enter SOTO and VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. We are ready
To take you to St. Mary's, Master
Cranmer.
Cranmer. And I : lead on ; ye loose
me from my bonds. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

COLE in the Pulpit, LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME presiding. LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, LORD PAGET, and others. CRANMER enters between SOTO and VILLA GARCIA, and the whole Choir strike up "Nunc Dimitis." CRANMER is set upon a Scaffold before the people.

Cole. Behold him —

[A pause : people in the foreground.
People. Oh, unhappy sight !

First Protestant. See how the tears
run down his fatherly face.

Second Protestant. James, didst thou
ever see a carrion crow

Stand watching a sick beast before he
dies ?

First Protestant. Him perch'd up
there ? I wish some thunder-
bolt

Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit
and all.

Cole. Behold him, brethren : he
hath cause to weep ! —

So have we all : weep with him if ye
will,

Yet —

It is expedient for one man to die,
Yea, for the people, lest the people
die.

Yet wherefore should he die that hath
return'd

To the one Catholic Universal Church,
Repentant of his errors ?

Protestant murmurs. Ay, tell us
that.

Cole. Those of the wrong side will
despise the man,
Deeming him one that thro' the fear
of death

Gave up his cause, except he seal his
faith

In sight of all with flaming martyr-
dom.

Cranmer. Ay.

Cole. Ye hear him, and albeit there
may seem

According to the canons pardon due
To him that so repents, yet are there
causes

Wherefore our Queen and Council at
this time

Adjudge him to the death. He hath
been a traitor,

A shaker and confounder of the
realm ;

And when the King's divorce was
sued at Rome,

He here, this heretic metropolitan,
As if he had been the Holy Father,
sat

And judged it. Did I call him
heretic ?

A huge heresiarch ! never was it
known

That any man so writing, preaching
so,

So poisoning the Church, so long continuing,
Hath found his pardon; therefore he must die,
For warning and example.

Other reasons
There be for this man's ending, which our Queen
And Council at this present deem it not
Expedient to be known.

Protestant murmurs. I warrant you. Cole. Take therefore, all, example by this man,

For if our Holy Queen not pardon him,
Much less shall others in like cause escape,
That all of you, the highest as the lowest,
May learn there is no power against the Lord.

There stands a man, once of so high degree,
Chief prelate of our Church, archbishop, first
In Council, second person in the realm,
Friend for so long time of a mighty King;
And now ye see downfallen and de-based
From councillor to caitiff — fallen so low,

The leprous flutterings of the byway scum
And offal of the city would not change
Estates with him; in brief, so miserable,
There is no hope of better left for him,
No place for worse.

Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.
This is the work of God. He is glorified
In thy conversion: lo! thou art re-claim'd;
He brings thee home: nor fear but that to-day
Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's award,
And be with Christ the Lord in Paradise.

Remember how God made the fierce fire seem
To those three children like a pleasant dew.
Remember, too,
The triumph of St. Andrew on his cross,
The patience of St. Lawrence in the fire.
Thus, if thou call on God and all the saints,
God will beat down the fury of the flame,
Or give thee saintly strength to undergo.
And for thy soul shall masses here be sung
By every priest in Oxford. Pray for him.

Cranmer. Ay, one and all, dear brothers, pray for me;
Pray with one breath, one heart, one soul for me.

Cole. And now, lest anyone among you doubt
The man's conversion and remorse of heart,
Yourselves shall hear him speak.
Speak, Master Cranmer,
Fulfil your promise made me, and proclaim
Your true undoubted faith, that all may hear.

Cranmer. And that I will. O God, Father of Heaven!
O Son of God, Redeemer of the world!
O Holy Ghost! proceeding from them both,
Three persons and one God, have mercy on me,
Most miserable sinner, wretched man.
I have offended against heaven and earth
More grievously than any tongue can tell.
Then whither should I flee for any help?
I am ashamed to lift my eyes to heaven,
And I can find no refuge upon earth.
Shall I despair then? — God forbid!
O God,
For thou art merciful, refusing none

That come to Thee for succor, unto
Thee,
Therefore, I come; humble myself to
Thee,
Saying, O Lord God, although my sins
be great,
For thy great mercy have mercy! O
God the Son,
Not for slight faults alone, when thou
becamest
Man in the Flesh, was the great mys-
tery wrought;
O God the Father, not for little sins
Didst thou yield up thy Son to human
death;
But for the greatest sin that can be
sinn'd,
Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,
Unpardonable,—sin against the light,
The truth of God, which I had proven
and known.
Thy mercy must be greater than all
sin.
Forgive me, Father, for no merit of
mine,
But that Thy name by man be glori-
fied,
And Thy most blessed Son's, who died
for man.
Good people, every man at time of
death
Would fain set forth some saying that
may live
After his death and better humankind;
For death gives life's last word a
power to live,
And, like the stone-cut epitaph, remain
After the vanish'd voice, and speak
to men.
God grant me grace to glorify my God!
And first I say it is a grievous case,
Many so dote upon this bubble world,
Whose colors in a moment break and
fly,
They care for nothing else. What
saith St. John:—
“Love of this world is hatred against
God.”
Again, I pray you all that, next to God,
You do unmurmuringly and willingly
Obey your King and Queen, and not
for dread

Of these alone, but from the fear of
Him
Whose ministers they be to govern
you.
Thirdly, I pray you all to live together
Like brethren; yet what hatred
Christian men
Bear to each other, seeming not as
brethren,
But mortal foes! But do you good to
all
As much as in you lieth. Hurt no
man more
Than you would harm your loving
natural brother
Of the same roof, same breast. If any
do,
Albeit he think himself at home with
God,
Of this be sure, he is whole worlds
away.
Protestant murmurs. What sort of
brothers then be those that lust
To burn each other?
Williams. Peace be among you,
there!
Cranmer. Fourthly, to those that
own exceeding wealth,
Remember that sore saying spoken
once
By Him that was the truth, “How
hard it is
For the rich man to enter into
Heaven;”
Let all rich men remember that hard
word.
I have not time for more: if ever, now
Let them flow forth in charity, seeing
now
The poor so many, and all food so
dear.
Long have I lain in prison, yet have
heard
Of all their wretchedness. Give to
the poor,
Ye give to God. He is with us in the
poor.
And now, forasmuch as I have
come
To the last end of life, and thereupon
Hangs all my past, and all my life to
be,

Either to live with Christ in Heaven
with joy,
Or to be still in pain with devils in
hell;

And, seeing in a moment, I shall find
Heaven or else hell ready to swallow
me, [Pointing upwards.
I shall declare to you my very faith
Without all color.

Cole. Hear him, my good brethren.
Cranmer. I do believe in God, Father
of all;
In every article of the Catholic faith,
And every syllable taught us by our
Lord,

His prophets, and apostles, in the
Testaments,
Both Old and New.

Cole. Be plainer, Master Cranmer.
Cranmer. And now I come to the
great cause that weighs
Upon my conscience more than any-
thing

Or said or done in all my life by me;
For there be writings I have set abroad
Against the truth I knew within my
heart,
Written for fear of death, to save my
life,
If that might be; the papers by my
hand
Sign'd since my degradation — by this
hand

[Holding out his right hand.
Written and sign'd — I here renounce
them all;
And, since my hand offended, having
written
Against my heart, my hand shall first
be burnt,
So I may come to the fire.

[Dead silence.
Protestant murmurs.

First Protestant. I knew it would be
so.

Second Protestant. Our prayers are
heard!

Third Protestant. God bless him!

Catholic murmurs. Out upon him!
out upon him!

Liar! dissembler! traitor! to the fire!

Williams (raising his voice). You
know that you recanted all you
said

Touching the sacrament in that same
book

You wrote against my Lord of Win-
chester;

Dissemble not; play the plain Chris-
tian man.

Cranmer. Alas, my Lord,
I have been a man loved plainness all
my life;

I did dissemble, but the hour has come
For utter truth and plainness; where-
fore, I say,

I hold by all I wrote within that book.

Moreover, As for the Pope I count him Anti-
christ,

With all his devil's doctrines; and
refuse,

Reject him, and abhor him. I have
said. [Cries on all sides,
"Pull him down! Away with
him!"

Cole. Ay, stop the heretic's mouth!
Hale him away!

Williams. Harm him not, harm him
not! have him to the fire!

[CRANMER goes out between Two
Friars, smiling; hands are reached
to him from the crowd. LORD
WILLIAM HOWARD and LORD
PAGET are left alone in the church.

Paget. The nave and aisles all
empty as a fool's jest!

No, here's Lord William Howard.
What, my Lord,

You have not gone to see the burning?
Howard. Fie!

To stand at ease, and stare as at a
show,

And watch a good man burn. Never
again.

I saw the deaths of Latimer and Rid-
ley.

Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would not,
For the pure honor of our common
nature,

Hear what I might — another recanta-
tion

Of Cranmer at the stake.

Paget. You'd not hear that.
He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd
upright;
His eye was like a soldier's, whom the
general
He looks to and he leans on as his
God,
Hath rated for some backwardness
and bidd'n him
Charge one against a thousand, and
the man
Hurls his soild' life against the pikes
and dies.

Howard. Yet that he might not
after all those papers
Of recantation yield again, who
knows?

Paget. Papers of recantation!
Think you then
That Cranmer read all papers that he
sign'd?
Or sign'd all those they tell us that he
sign'd?
Nay, I trow not: and you shall see,
my Lord,
That howsoever hero-like the man
Dies in the fire, this Bonner or another
Will in some lying fashion misreport
His ending to the glory of their
church.
And you saw Latimer and Ridley die?
Latimer was eighty, was he not? his
best
Of life was over then.

Howard. His eighty years
Look'd somewhat crooked on him in
his frieze;
But after they had stript him to his
shroud,
He stood upright, a lad of twenty-one,
And gather'd with his hands the start-
ing flame,
And wash'd his hands and all his face
therin,
Until the powder suddenly blew him
dead.
Ridley was longer burning; but he
died
As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore
God,
I know them heretics, but right Eng-
lish ones.

If ever, as heaven grant, we clash
with Spain,
Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-
sailors

Will teach her something.

Paget. Your mild Legate Pole
Will tell you that the devil helpt them
thro' it.

[A murmur of the Crowd in the
distance.]

Hark, how those Roman wolfdogs
howl and bay him!

Howard. Might it not be the other
side rejoicing

In his brave end?

Paget. They are too crush'd, too
broken,

They can but weep in silence.

Howard. Ay, ay, Paget,
They have brought it in large measure
on themselves.

Have I not heard them mock the
blessed Host
In songs so lewd, the beast might roar
his claim

To being in God's image, more than
they?

Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the
groom,

Gardener, and huntsman, in the par-
son's place,

The parson from his own spire swung
out dead,

And Ignorance crying in the streets,
and all men

Regarding her? I say they have
drawn the fire

On their own heads: yet, Paget, I do
hold

The Catholic, if he have the greater
right,

Hath been the cruellest.

Paget. Action and re-action,
The miserable see-saw of our child-
world,

Make us despise it at odd hours, my
Lord.

Heaven help that this re-action not
re-act

Yet fiercelier under Queen Elizabeth,
So that she come to rule us.

Howard. The world's mad.

Paget. My Lord, the world is like
a drunken man,
Who cannot move straight to his end
—but reels
Now to the right, then as far to the
left,
Push'd by the crowd beside—and
underfoot
An earthquake; for since Henry for
a doubt—
Which a young lust had clapt upon
the back,
Crying, "Forward!" — set our old
church rocking, men
Have hardly known what to believe,
or whether
They should believe in anything; the
currents
So shift and change, they see not
how they are borne,
Nor whither. I conclude the King a
beast;
Verily a lion if you will—the world
A' most obedient beast and fool—
myself
Half beast and fool as appertaining
to it;
Altho' your Lordship hath as little of
each
Cleaving to your original Adam-clay,
As may be consonant with mortality.
Howard. We talk and Cranmer
suffers.
The kindest man I ever knew; see,
see,
I speak of him in the past. Unhappy
land!
Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in
herself,
And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock
of Spain—
Her life, since Philip left her, and she
lost
Her fierce desire of bearing him a
child,
Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's
day,
Gone narrowing down and darkening
to a close.
There will be more conspiracies, I
fear.
Paget. Ay, ay, beware of France.

Howard. O Paget, Paget!
I have seen heretics of the poorer
sort,
Expectant of the rack from day to
day,
To whom the fire were welcome, lying
chain'd
In breathless dungeons over steaming
sewers,
Fed with rank bread that crawl'd upon
the tongue,
And putrid water, every drop a worm,
Until they died of rotted limbs; and
then
Cast on the dunghill naked, and
become
Hideously alive again from head to
heel,
Made even the carrion-nosing mongrel
vomit
With hate and horror.

Paget. Nay, you sicken me
To hear you.

Howard. Fancy-sick; these things
are done,
Done right against the promise of this
Queen
Twice given.

Paget. No faith with heretics, my
Lord!
Hist! there be two old gossipers—gos-
pellers,
I take it; stand behind the pillar here;
I warrant you they talk about the
burning.

*Enter Two Old Women. JOAN, and
after her TIB.*

Joan. Why, it be Tib!

Tib. I cum behind tha, gall, and
couldn't make tha hear. Eh, the wind
and the wet! What a day, what a
day! nigh upo' judgement daay toike.
Pwoaps be pretty things, Joan, but
they wunt set i' the Lord's cheer o'
that daay.

Joan. I must set down myself, Tib;
it be a var waay vor my owld legs up
vro' Islip. Eh, my rheumatizy be that
bad howiver be I to win to the burnin'.

Tib. I should saay 'twur ower by

now. I'd ha' been here avore, but Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, and Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

Joan. Our Daisy's as good 'z her.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's butter's as good 'z hern.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's cheeses be better.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Eh, then ha' thy waay wi' me, Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld man.

Tib. Ay, Joan, and my owld man wur up and awaay betimes wi' dree hard eggs for a good peace at the burnin'; and barrin' the wet, Hodge 'ud ha' been a-harrowin' o' white peaseen i' the outfield — and barrin' the wind, Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, so 'z we was forced to stick her, but we fetched her round at last. Thank the Lord therevore. Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

Joan. Thou's thy way wi' man and beast, Tib. I wonder at tha', it beats me! Eh, but I do know ez Fwoaps and vires be bad things; tell 'ee now, I heerd summat as summun towld summuun o' owld Bishop Gardiner's end; there wur an owld lord a-cum to dine wi' un, and a wur so owld a couldn't bide vor his dinner, but a had to bide howsomiver, vor "I wunt dine," says my Lord Bishop, says he, "not till I hears ez Latimer and Ridley be a-vire;" and so they bided on and on till vour o' the clock, till his man cum in post vro' here, and tells un ez the vire has tuk holt. "Now," says the Bishop, says he, "we'll gwo to dinner;" and the owld lord fell to 's meat wi' a will, God bless un! but Gardiner wur struck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossal, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lollupping out o' is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord, therevore.

Paget. The fools!

Tib. Ay, Joan; and Queen Mary

gwoes on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born; but all her burnins' ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

Joan. Thank the Lord, therevore.

Paget. The fools!

Tib. A-burnin' and a-burnin', and a-makin' o' volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor't, Joan, — and I bean't wrong not twice i' ten year — the burnin' o' the owld archbishop 'll burn the Pwoap out o' this 'cre land vor iver and iver.

Howard. Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones, Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right? For how should reverend prelate or throned prince Brook for an hour such brute malignity?

Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd!

Paget. Pooh, pooh, my Lord! poor garrulous country-wives. Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you; You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

Howard. I think that in some sort we may. But see,

Enter PETERS.

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic,
Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.

One that would neither misreport nor lie,

Not to gain paradise: no, nor if the Pope,
Charged him to do it — he is white as death.

Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke

Of Cranmer's burning with you,

Peters. Twice or thrice
The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

Howard. Peters, you know me
Catholic, but English.
Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or
leave
All else untold.

Peters. My Lord, he died most
bravely.

Howard. Then tell me all.

Paget. Ay, Master Peters, tell us.
Peters. You saw him how he past
among the crowd;

And ever as he walk'd the Spanish
friars
Still plied him with entreaty and re-
proach:

But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the
helm
Steers, ever looking to the happy ha-
ven

Where he shall rest at night, moved
to his death;

And I could see that many silent
hands
Came from the crowd and met his
own; and thus,

When we had come where Ridley
burnt with Latimer,
He, with a cheerful smile, as one
whose mind

Is all made up, in haste put off the
rags
They had mock'd his misery with, and
all in white,
His long white beard, which he had
never shaven

Since Henry's death, down-sweeping
to the chain
Wherewith they bound him to the
stake, he stood

More like an ancient father of the
Church,
Than heretic of these times; and still
the friars

Plied him, but Cranmer only shook
his head,

Or answer'd them in smiling negatives;
Wherat Lord Williams gave a sud-
den cry:—

" Make short! make short!" and so
they lit the wood.

Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to
heaven,

And thrust his right into the bitter
flame;
And crying, in his deep voice, more
than once,
" This hath offended — this unworthy
hand!"

So held it till it all was burn'd, before
The flame had reach'd his body; I
stood near —

Mark'd him — he never uttered moan
of pain:

He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like a
statue,

Unmoving in the greatness of the
flame,
Gave up the ghost; and so past mar-
tyr-like —

Martyr I may not call him — past —
but whither?

Paget. To purgatory, man, to pur-
gatory.

Peters. Nay, but, my Lord, he de-
nied purgatory.

Paget. Why then to heaven, and
God ha' mercy on him.

Howard. Paget, despite his fearful
heresies,
I loved the man, and needs must
moan for him;
O Cranmer!

Paget. But your moan is useless
now:
Come out, my Lord, it is a world of
fools. [Exeunt.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—LONDON. HALL IN THE
PALACE.

QUEEN, SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. Madam,
I do assure you, that it must be look'd
to:
Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes
Are scarce two hundred men, and the
French fleet

Rule in the narrow seas. It must be
look'd to,
If war should fall between yourself
and France;
Or you will lose your Calais.

Mary. It shall be look'd to;
I wish you a good morning, good Sir
Nicholas :
Here is the King. [Exit Heath.]

Enter PHILIP.

Philip. Sir Nicholas tells you true,
And you must look to Calais when I go.

Mary. Go ? must you go, indeed —
again — so soon ?
Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the
swallow,
That might live always in the sun's
warm heart,
Stays longer here in our poor north
than you : —
Knows where he nested — ever comes
again.

Philip. And, Madam, so shall I.
Mary. O, will you ? will you ?
I am faint with fear that you will
come no more.

Philip. Ay, ay ; but many voices
call me hence.
Mary. Voices — I hear unhappy
rumors — nay,
I say not, I believe. What voices
call you
Dearer than mine that should be dearest
to you ?
Alas, my Lord ! what voices and how
many ?

Philip. The voices of Castile and
Aragon,
Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan,—
The voices of Franche-Comté, and the
Netherlands,
The voices of Peru and Mexico,
Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines,
And all the fair spice-islands of the
East.

Mary (*admiringly*). You are the
mightiest monarch upon earth,
I but a little Queen : and, so indeed,
Need you the more.

Philip. A little Queen ! but when
I came to wed your Majesty, Lord
Howard,
Sending an insolent shot that dash'd
the seas
Upon us, made us lower our kingly flag
To yours of England.

Mary. Howard is all English !
There is no king, not were he ten times
king,
Ten times our husband, but must
lower his flag
To that of England in the seas of
England.

Philip. Is that your answer ?

Mary. Being Queen of England,
I have none other.

Philip. So.

Mary. But wherefore not
Helm the huge vessel of your state,
my liege,
Here by the side of her who loves you
most ?

Philip. No, Madam, no ! a candle in
the sun
Is all but smoke — a star beside the
moon
Is all but lost ; your people will not
crown me —
Your people are as cheerless as your
clime ;
Hate me and mine : witness the brawls,
the gibbets.
Here swings a Spaniard — there an
Englishman ;
The peoples are unlike as their com-
plexion ;
Yet will I be your swallow and re-
turn —
But now I cannot bide.

Mary. Not to help me ?
They hate me also for my love to you,
My Philip ; and these judgments on
the land —
Harvestless autumns, horrible agues,
plague —

Philip. The blood and sweat of
heretics at the stake
Is God's best dew upon the barren field.
Burn more !

Mary. I will, I will ; and you will
stay ?

Philip. Have I not said ? Madam,
I came to sue
Your Council and yourself to declare
war.

Mary. Sir, there are many English
in your ranks
To help your battle.

Philip. So far, good. I say
I came to sue your Council and your-
self
To declare war against the King of
France.

Mary. Not to see me?

Philip. Ay, Madam, to see you.
Unalterably and pesteringly fond!

[Aside.]
But, soon or late you must have war
with France;
King Henry warms your traitors at
his hearth.
Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford
there.
Courtenay, belike —

Mary. A fool and featherhead!

Philip. Ay, but they use his name.

In brief, this Henry
Stirs up your land against you to the
intent
That you may lose your English her-
itage.
And then, your Scottish namesake
marrying
The Dauphin, he would weld France,
England, Scotland,
Into one sword to hack at Spain and
me.

Mary. And yet the Pope is now
colleagued with France;
You make your wars upon him down
in Italy: —

Philip. Can that be well?

Philip. Content you, Madam;
You must abide my judgment, and
my father's,
Who deems it a most just and holy
war.

The Pope would cast the Spaniard
out of Naples:
He calls us worse than Jews, Moors,
Saracens.

The Pope has pushed his horns be-
yond his mitre —
Beyond his province. Now,
Duke Alva will but touch him on the
horns,
And he withdraws; and of his holy
head —
For Alva is true son of the true
church —

No hair is harm'd. Will you not help
me here?

Mary. Alas! the Council will not
hear of war.

They say your wars are not the wars
of England.

They will not lay more taxes on a
land

So hunger-nipt and wretched; and
you know

The crown is poor. We have given
the church-lands back:

The nobles would not; nay, they clapt
their hands

Upon their swords when ask'd; and
therefore God

Is hard upon the people. What's to
be done?

Sir, I will move them in your cause
again,

And we will raise us loans and subsidies
Among the merchants; and Sir

Thomas Gresham
Will aid us. There is Antwerp and
the Jews.

Philip. Madam, my thanks.

Mary. And you will stay your
going?

Philip. And further to discourage
and lay lame

The plots of France, altho' you love
her not,

You must proclaim Elizabeth your
heir.

She stands between you and the
Queen of Scots.

Mary. The Queen of Scots at least
is Catholic.

Philip. Ay, Madam, Catholic; but
I will not have
The King of France the King of Eng-
land too.

Mary. But she's a heretic, and,
when I am gone,
Brings the new learning back.

Philip. It must be done.
You must proclaim Elizabeth your
heir.

Mary. Then it is done; but you will
stay your going
Somewhat beyond your settled pur-
pose?

Philip. No!

Mary. What, not one day?

Philip. You beat upon the rock.

Mary. And I am broken there.

Philip. Is this a place

To wail in, Madam? what! a public
hall.

Go in, I pray you.

Mary. Do not seem so changed.
Say go; but only say it lovingly.

Philip. You do mistake. I am not
one to change.

I never loved you more.

Mary. Sire, I obey you.
Come quickly.

Philip. Ay. [Exit Mary.

Enter COUNT DE FERIA.

Feria (aside). The Queen in tears!

Philip. Feria!
Hast thou not mark'd — come closer
to mine ear —

How doubly aged this Queen of ours
hath grown
Since she lost hope of bearing us a
child?

Feria. Sire, if your Grace hath
mark'd it, so have I.

Philip. Hast thou not likewise
mark'd Elizabeth,
How fair and royal — like a Queen,
indeed?

Feria. Allow me the same answer
as before —
That if your Grace hath mark'd her,
so have I.

Philip. Good, now; methinks my
Queen is like enough
To leave me by and by.

Feria. To leave you, sire?

Philip. I mean not like to live.
Elizabeth —

To Philibert of Savoy, as you know,
We meant to wed her; but I am not
sure

She will not serve me better — so my
Queen

Would leave me — as — my wife.

Feria. Sire, even so.

Philip. She will not have Prince
Philibert of Savoy.

Feria. No, sire.

Philip. I have to pray you,
some odd time,
To sound the Princess carelessly on
this;

Not as from me, but as your phantasy:
And tell me how she takes it.

Feria. Sire, I will.

Philip. I am not certain but that
Philibert
Shall be the man; and I shall urge
his suit
Upon the Queen, because I am not
certain:
You understand, Feria.

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. And if you be not secret
in this matter,
You understand me there, too?

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. You must be sweet and
supple, like a Frenchman.
She is none of those who loathe the
honeycomb. [Exit Feria.

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My liege, I bring you
goodly tidings.

Philip. Well?

Renard. There will be war with
France, at last, my liege;
Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed
ass,

Sailing from France, with thirty Eng-
lishmen,

Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of
York;

Proclaims himself protector, and af-
firms

The Queen has forfeited her right to
reign

By marriage with an alien — other
things

As idle; a weak Wyatt! Little doubt
This buzz will soon be silenced; but
the Council
(I have talk'd with some already) are
for war.

This the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in
France;

They show their teeth upon it; and
your Grace,

So you will take advice of mine,
Should stay
Yet for awhile, to shape and guide the
event.

Philip. Good! Renard, I will stay
then.

Renard. Also, sire,
Might I not say — to please your wife,
the Queen?

Philip. Ay, Renard, if you care to
put it so. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

MARY, sitting: a rose in her hand.
LADY CLARENCE. ALICE in the background.

Mary. Look! I have play'd with
this poor rose so long
I have broken off the head.

Lady Clarence. Your Grace hath
been
More merciful to many a rebel head
That should have fallen, and may rise
again.

Mary. There were not many hang'd
for Wyatt's rising.

Lady Clarence. Nay, not two hundred.

Mary. I could weep for them
And her, and mine own self and all
the world.

Lady Clarence. For her? for whom,
your Grace?

Enter USHER.

Usher. The Cardinal.

Enter CARDINAL POLE. (*MARY rises.*)

Mary. Reginald Pole, what news
hath plagued thy heart?
What makes thy favor like the blood-
less head
Fall'n on the block, and held up by
the hair?
Philip? —

Pole. No, Philip is as warm in life
As ever.

Mary. Ay, and then as cold as
ever.

Is Calais taken?

Pole. Cousin, there hath chanced
A sharper harm to England and to
Rome,
Than Calais taken. Julius the Third
Was ever just, and mild, and father-
like;

But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the
Fourth,
Not only left me of that legateship
Which Julius gave me, and the legate-
ship

Annex'd to Canterbury — nay, but
worse —

And yet I must obey the Holy Father,
And so must you, good cousin; —
worse than all,

A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear —
He hath cited me to Rome, for heresy,
Before his Inquisition.

Mary. I knew it, cousin,
But held from you all papers sent by
Rome,
That you might rest among us, till
the Pope,
To compass which I wrote myself to
Rome,
Reversed his doom, and that you
might not seem
To disobey his Holiness.

Pole. He hates Philip;
He is all Italian, and he hates the
Spaniard;
He cannot dream that I advised the
war;
He strikes thro' me at Philip and
yourself.
Nay, but I know it of old, he hates
me too;
So brands me in the stare of Christen-
dom

A heretic!
Now, even now, when bow'd before
my time,
The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be
out;
When I should guide the Church in
peace at home,
After my twenty years of banishment,
And all my lifelong labor to uphold
The primacy — a heretic. Long ago,
When I was ruler in the patrimony,
I was too lenient to the Lutheran,

And I and learned friends among ourselves
Would freely canvass certain Lutheranism.

What then, he knew I was no Lutheran.
A heretic!
He drew this shaft against me to the head,
When it was thought I might be chosen Pope,
But then withdrew it. In full consistory,
When I was made Archbishop, he approved me.
And how should he have sent me Legate hither,
Deeming me heretic? and what heresy since?

But he was evermore mine enemy,
And hates the Spaniard — fiery-choleric,
A drinker of black, strong, volcanic wines,
That ever make him fierier. I, a heretic?
Your Highness knows that in pursuing heresy
I have gone beyond your late Lord Chancellor,—
He cried Enough! enough! before his death.—
Gone beyond him and mine own natural man
(It was God's cause); so far they call me now,
The scourge and butcher of their English church.

Mary. Have courage, your reward is Heaven itself.

Pole. They groan amen; they swarm into the fire
Like flies — for what? no dogma.
They know nothing;
They burn for nothing.

Mary. You have done your best.

Pole. Have done my best, and as a faithful son,
That all day long hath wrought his father's work,
When back he comes at evening hath the door

Shut on him by the father whom he loved,

His early follies cast into his teeth,
And the poor son turn'd out into the street
To sleep, to die — I shall die of it, cousin.

Mary. I pray you be not so disconsolate;

I still will do mine utmost with the Pope.

Poor cousin!

Have not I been the fast friend of your life

Since mine began, and it was thought we two

Might make one flesh, and cleave unto each other

As man and wife?

Pole. Ah, cousin, I remember How I would dandle you upon my knee

At lisping-age. I watch'd you dancing once

With your huge father; he look'd the Great Harry,

You but his cockboat; prettily you did it,

And innocently. No — we were not made

One flesh in happiness, no happiness here;

But now we are made one flesh in misery;

Our bridesmaids are not lovely — Disappointment,

Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue, Labor-in-vain.

Mary. Surely, not all in vain. Peace, cousin, peace! I am sad at heart myself.

Pole. Our altar is a mound of dead men's clay,

Dug from the grave that yawns for us beyond;

And there is one Death stands behind the Groom,

And there is one Death stands behind the Bride —

Mary. Have you been looking at the "Dance of Death"?

Pole. No; but these libellous papers
which I found
Strewn in your palace. Look you
here — the Pope
Pointing at me with “Pole, the here-
tic,
Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn
thyself,
Or I will burn thee;” and this other;
see!—
“ We pray continually for the death
Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal
Pole.”

This last — I dare not read it her.
[*Aside.*

Mary. Away!
Why do you bring me these?
I thought you knew me better. I
never read,
I tear them; they come back upon my
dreams.
The hands that write them should be
burnt clean off
As Cranmer’s, and the fiends that
utter them
Tongue-torn with pincers, lash’d to
death, or lie
Famishing in black cells, while fam-
ish’d rats
Eat them alive. Why do they bring
me these?

Do you mean to drive me mad?

Pole. I had forgotten
How these poor libels trouble you.
Your pardon,
Sweet cousin, and farewell! “ O bubble
world,
Whose colors in a moment break and
fly ! ”

Why, who said that? I know not —
true enough!

[*Puts up the papers, all but the last,*
which falls. *Exit Pole.*
Alice. If Cranmer’s spirit were a
mocking one,
And heard these two, there might be
sport for him.] [*Aside.*

Mary. Clarence, they hate me;
even while I speak
There lurks a silent dagger, listening
In some dark closet, some long gal-
lery, drawn,

And panting for my blood as I go by
Lady Clarence. Nay, Madam, there
be loyal papers too,
And I have often found them.

Mary. Find me one!
Lady Clarence. Ay, Madam; but
Sir Nicholas Heath, the Chan-
cellor,

Would see your Highness.

Mary. Wherefore should I see
him?

Lady Clarence. Well, Madam, he
may bring you news from
Philip.

Mary. So, Clarence.

Lady Clarence. Let me first put
up your hair;
It tumbles all abroad.

Mary. And the gray dawn
Of an old age that never will be mine
Is all the clearer seen. No, no; what
matters?

Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.

Enter SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. I bring your Majesty such
grievous news
I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais
is taken.

Mary. What traitor spoke? Here,
let my cousin Pole
Seize him and burn him for a Lu-
theran.

Heath. Her Highness is unwell. I
will retire.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your Chan-
cellor, Sir Nicholas Heath.

Mary. Sir Nicholas! I am stunn’d
— Nicholas Heath?

Methought some traitor smote me on
the head.

What said you, my good Lord, that
our brave English
Had sallied out from Calais and
driven back

The Frenchmen from their trenches?

Heath. Alas! no.
That gateway to the mainland over
which
Our flag hath floated for two hundred
years
Is France again.

Mary. So; but it is not lost —
Not yet. Send out: let England as of
old
Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep
into
The prey they are rending from her
— ay, and rend
The renders too. Send out, send out,
and make
Musters in all the counties; gather
all
From sixteen years to sixty; collect
the fleet;
Let every craft that carries sail and
gun
Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not
taken yet?

Heath. Guisnes is not taken yet.

Mary. There is yet hope.

Heath. Ah, Madam, but your peo-
ple are so cold;
I do much fear that England will not
care.

Methinks there is no manhood left
among us.

Mary. Send out; I am too weak to
stir abroad:
Tell my mind to the Council — to the
Parliament:
Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art
cold thyself
To babble of their coldness. O would
I were

My father for an hour! Away now —
Quick! [Exit Heath.
I hoped I had served God with all my
might!

It seems I have not. Ah! much
heresy
Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have
rebuilt
Your shrines, set up your broken
images;

Be comfortable to me. Suffer not
That my brief reign in England be
defamed

Thro' all her angry chronicles here-
after

By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais.
Philip,

We have made war upon the Holy
Father

All for your sake: what good could
come of that?

Lady Clarence. No, Madam, not
against the Holy Father;
You did but help King Philip's war
with France,
Your troops were never down in Italy.

Mary. I am a byword. Heretic and
rebel
Point at me and make merry. Philip
gone!

And Calais gone! Time that I were
gone too!

Lady Clarence. Nay, if the fetid
gutter had a voice
And cried I was not clean, what
should I care?

Or you, for heretic cries? And I
believe,

Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicholas,
Your England is as loyal as myself.

Mary (seeing the paper dropt by Pole).
There! there! another paper!
Said you not

Many of these were loyal? Shall I
try
If this be one of such?

Lady Clarence. Let it be, let it be.
God pardon me! I have never yet
found one. [Aside.

Mary (reads). "Your people hate
you as your husband hates you."
Clarence, Clarence, what have I done?
what sin

Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother
of God,

Thou knowest woman never meant so
well,

And fared so ill in this disastrous
world.

My people hate me and desire my
death.

Lady Clarence. No, Madam, no.

Mary. My husband hates me, and
desires my death.

Lady Clarence. No, Madam; these
are libels.

Mary. I hate myself, and I desire
my death.

Lady Clarence. Long live your
Majesty! Shall Alice sing
you

One of her pleasant songs? Alice,
my child,
Bring us your lute (*Alice goes*). They
say the gloom of Saul
Was lighten'd by young David's harp.
Mary. Too young!
And never knew a Philip.

Re-enter Alice.

Give me the lute.

He hates me!

(*She sings.*)

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!
Beauty passes like a breath and love is lost
in loathing:
Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say
the world is nothing—
Low, lute, low!
Love will hover round the flowers when they
first awaken;
Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be over-
taken;
Low, my lute! oh low, my lute! we fade and
are forsaken—
Low, dear lute, low!

Take it away! not low enough for me!

Alice. Your Grace hath a low voice.

Mary. How dare you say it?
Even for that he hates me. A low
voice

Lost in a wilderness where none can
hear!

A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless
sea!

A low voice from the dust and from
the grave

(*Sitting on the ground.*) There, am I
low enough now?

Alice. Good Lord! how grim and
ghastly looks her Grace,
With both her knees drawn upward to
her chin.

There was an old-world tomb beside
my father's,
And this was open'd, and the dead
were found

Sitting, and in this fashion; she looks
a corpse.

Enter LADY MAGDALEN DACCES.

Lady Magdalén. Madam, the Count
de Feria waits without,
In hopes to see your Highness.

Lady Clarence (pointing to Mary).

Wait he must—

Her trance again. She neither sees
nor hears,

And may not speak for hours.

Lady Magdalén. Unhappiest
Of Queens and wives and women!

Alice (in the foreground with Lady
Magdalén.) And all along
Of Philip.

Lady Magdalén. Not so loud! Our
Clarence there
Sees ever such an aureole round the
Queen,
It gilds the greatest wronger of her
peace,
Who stands the nearest to her.

Alice. Ay, this Philip;
I used to love the Queen with all my
heart—

God help me, but methinks I love her
less
For such a dotage upon such a man.
I would I were as tall and strong as
you.

Lady Magdalén. I seem half-shamed
at times to be so tall.

Alice. You are the stateliest deer in
all the herd—

Beyond his aim—but I am small and
scandalous,

And love to hear bad tales of Philip.

Lady Magdalén. Why?
I never heard him utter worse of you
Than that you were low-statured.

Alice. Does he think
Low stature is low nature, or all wom-
en's

Low as his own?

Lady Magdalén. There you strike
in the nail.

This coarseness is a want of phantasy.
It is the low man thinks the woman
low;

Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.

Alice. Ah, Magdalén, sin is bold as
well as dull.

How dared he?

Lady Magdalén. Stupid soldiers oft
are bold.

Poor lads, they see not what the gen-
eral sees,

A risk of utter ruin. I am *not*
Beyond his aim, or was not.

Alice. Who? Not you?
Tell, tell me; save my credit with
myself.

Lady Magdalen. I never breathed
it to a bird in the eaves,
Would not for all the stars and
maiden moon
Our drooping Queen should know! In
Hampton Court

My window look'd upon the corridor;
And I was robing; — this poor throat
of mine,

Barer than I should wish a man to see
it,—

When he we speak of drove the win-
dow back,

And, like a thief, push'd in his royal
hand;

But by God's providence a good stout
staff

Lay near me; and you know me
strong of arm;

I do believe I lamed his Majesty's
For a day or two, tho', give the Devil
his due,

I never found he bore me any spite.

Alice. I would she could have wed-
ded that poor youth,

My Lord of Devon — light enough,
God knows,

And mixt with Wyatt's rising — and
the boy

Not out of him — but neither cold,
coarse, cruel,

And more than all — no Spaniard.

Lady Clarence. Not so loud.
Lord Devon, girls! what are you
whispering here?

Alice. Probing an old state-secret —
how it chanced
That this young Earl was sent on
foreign travel,
Not lost his head.

Lady Clarence. There was no proof
against him.

Alice. Nay, Madam; did not Gardi-
ner intercept
A letter which the Count de Noailles
wrote

To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full
proof
Of Courtenay's treason? What be-
came of that?

Lady Clarence. Some say that
Gardiner, out of love for him,
Burnt it, and some relate that it was
lost

When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's
house in Southwark.
Let dead things rest.

Alice. Ay, and with him who died
Alone in Italy.

Lady Clarence. Much changed, I
hear,
Had put off levity and put graveness
on.

The foreign courts report him in his
manner

Noble as his young person and old
shield.

It might be so — but all is over
now;

He caught a chill in the lagoons of
Venice,

And died in Padua.

Mary (*looking up suddenly*). Died
in the true faith?

Lady Clarence. Ay, Madam, happily.

Mary. Happier he than I.

Lady Magdalen. It seems her High-
ness hath awaken'd. Think you

That I might dare to tell her that the

Count —

Mary. I will see no man hence for
evermore,

Saving my confessor and my cousin
Pole.

Lady Magdalen. It is the Count de
Feria, my dear lady.

Mary. What Count?

Lady Magdalen. The Count de
Feria, from his Majesty

King Philip.

Mary. Philip! quick! loop up my
hair!

Throw cushions on that seat, and make
it throne-like.

Arrange my dress — the gorgeous
Indian shawl
That Phillip brought me in our happy
days! —

That covers all. So—am I somewhat
Queenlike,
Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon
earth ?

Lady Clarence. Ay, so your Grace
would bide a moment yet.

Mary. No, no, he brings a letter.
I may die
Before I read it. Let me see him at
once.

Enter COUNT DE FERIA (kneels).

Feria. I trust your Grace is well.
(*Aside*) How her hand burns !

Mary. I am not well, but it will
better me,

Sir Count, to read the letter which
you bring.

Feria. Madam, I bring no letter.

Mary. How ! no letter ?
Feria. His Highness is so vex'd with
strange affairs —

Mary. That his own wife is no affair
of his.

Feria. Nay, Madam, nay ! he sends
his veriest love,
And says, he will come quickly.

Mary. Doth he, indeed ?
You, sir, do you remember what you
said

When last you came to England ?

Feria. Madam, I brought
My King's congratulations ; it was
hoped
Your Highness was once more in happy
state

To give him an heir male.

Mary. Sir, you said more ;
You said he would come quickly. I
had horses

On all the road from Dover, day and
night ;

On all the road from Harwich, night
and day ;

But the child came not, and the hus-
band came not ;

And yet he will come quickly . . .

Thou hast learnt
Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no
need

For Philip so to shame himself again.
Return,

And tell him that I know he comes no
more.

Tell him at last I know his love is
dead,
And that I am in state to bring forth
death —

Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth,
And not to me !

Feria. Mere compliments and
wishes.

But shall I take some message from
your Grace ?

Mary. Tell her to come and close
my dying eyes,
And wear my crown, and dance upon
my grave.

Feria. Then I may say your Grace
will see your sister ?

Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air
and sunshine.
I would we had you, Madam, in our
warm Spain.

You droop in your dim London.

Mary. Have him away !
I sicken of his readiness.

Lady Clarence. My Lord Count,
Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.

Feria (kneels, and kisses her hand).
I wish her Highness better.

(*Aside*) How her hand burns !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—A HOUSE NEAR LONDON.

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE HOUSE-
HOLD, ATTENDANTS.

Elizabeth. There's half an angel
wrong'd in your account ;
Methinks I am all angel, that I bear
it

Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er
again.

Steward. I were whole devil if I
wrong'd you, Madam.

[*Exit Steward.*

Attendant. The Count de Feria from
the King of Spain.

Elizabeth. Ah ! — let him enter.
Nay, you need not go :

[*To her Ladies.*

Remain within the chamber, but apart.
We'll have no private conference.
Welcome to England!

Enter FERIA.

Feria. Fair island star!

Elizabeth. I shine! What else, Sir
Count?

Feria. As far as France, and into
Philip's heart.

My King would know if you be fairly
served,
And lodged, and treated.

Elizabeth. You see the lodging, sir,
I am well-served, and am in everything
Most loyal and most grateful to the
Queen.

Feria. You should be grateful to
my master, too.
He spoke of this; and unto him you
owe

That Mary hath acknowledged you
her heir.

Elizabeth. No, not to her nor him;
but to the people,
Who know my right, and love me, as
I love

The people! whom God aid!

Feria. You will be Queen,
And, were I Philip —

Elizabeth. Wherefore pause you —
what?

Feria. Nay, but I speak from mine
own self, not him;
Your royal sister cannot last; your
hand

Will be much coveted! What a delicate one!

Our Spanish ladies have none such —
and there,

Were you in Spain, this fine fair gos-
samer gold —

Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty
dawn —

That hovers round your shoulder —

Elizabeth. Is it so fine?
Troth, some have said so.

Feria. — would be deemed a mira-
cle.

Elizabeth. Your Philip hath gold
hair and golden beard;

There must be ladies many with hair
like mine.

Feria. Some few of Gothic blood
have golden hair,
But none like yours.

Elizabeth. I am happy you approve
it.

Feria. But as to Philip and your
Grace — consider, —
If such a one as you should match
with Spain,
What hinders but that Spain and
England join'd,
Should make the mightiest empire
earth has known.
Spain would be England on her seas,
and England
Mistress of the Indies.

Elizabeth. It may chance, that
England
Will be the Mistress of the Indies yet,
Without the help of Spain.

Feria. Impossible;
Except you put Spain down.
Wide of the mark ev'n for a madman's
dream.

Elizabeth. Perhaps; but we have
seamen. Count de Feria,
I take it that the King hath spoken
to you;
But is Don Carlos such a goodly
match?

Feria. Don Carlos, Madam, is but
twelve years old.

Elizabeth. Ay, tell the King that I
will muse upon it;
He is my good friend, and I would
keep him so;
But — he would have me Catholic of
Rome,

And that I scarce can be; and, sir, till
now

My sister's marriage, and my father's
marriages,
Make me full fain to live and die a
maid.

But I am much beholden to your
King.

Have you aught else to tell me?

Feria. Nothing, Madam,
Save that methought I gather'd from
the Queen

That she would see your Grace before
she — died.

Elizabeth. God's death! and where-
fore spake you not before?
We dally with our lazy moments here,
And hers are number'd. Horses
there, without!
I am much beholding to the King, your
master.

Why did you keep me prating?
Horses, there!

[Exit Elizabeth, etc.

Feria. So from a clear sky falls the
thunderbolt!
Don Carlos? Madam, if you marry
Philip,
Then I and he will snaffle your "God's
death,"
And brake your paces in, and make
you tame;
God's death, forsooth — you do not
know King Philip. [Exit.]

SCENE IV.—LONDON. BEFORE THE PALACE.

*A light burning within. Voices of the
night passing.*

First. Is not yon light in the
Queen's chamber?

Second. Ay,
They say she's dying.

First. So is Cardinal Pole.
May the great angels join their wings,
and make
Down for their heads to heaven!

Second. Amen. Come on.
[Exeunt.

TWO OTHERS.

First. There's the Queen's light.
I hear she cannot live.

Second. God curse her and her
Legate! Gardiner burns

Already; but to pay them full in kind,
The hottest hold in all the devil's den
Were but a sort of winter; sir, in
Guernsey,
I watch'd a woman burn; and in her
agony

The mother came upon her — a child
was born —
And, sir, they hurl'd it back into the
fire,
That, being but baptised in fire, the
babe
Might be in fire for ever. Ah, good
neighbor,
There should be something fierier than
fire
To yield them their deserts.

First. Amen to all.

Your wish, and further.

A Third Voice. Deserts! Amen to
what? Whose deserts? Yours?
You have a gold ring on your finger,
and soft raiment about your body;
and is not the woman up yonder sleep-
ing after all she has done, in peace and
quietness, on a soft bed, in a closed
room, with light, fire, physic, tend-
ance; and I have seen the true men
of Christ lying famine-dead by scores,
and under no ceiling but the cloud that
wept on them, not for them.

First. Friend, tho' so late, it is not
safe to preach.

You had best go home. What are
you?

Third. What am I? One who cries
continually with sweat and tears to
the Lord God that it would please Him
out of His infinite love to break down
all kingship and queenship, all priest-
hood and prelacy; to cancel and
abolish all bonds of human allegiance,
all the magistracy, all the nobles, and
all the wealthy; and to send us again,
according to His promise, the one King,
the Christ, and all things in common,
as in the day of the first church, when
Christ Jesus was King.

First. If ever I heard a madman,
— let's away!

Why, you long-winded — Sir, you
go beyond me.

I pride myself on being moderate.
Good night! Go home. Besides, you
curse so loud,

The watch will hear you. Get you
home at once. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.—LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

A Gallery on one side. The moonlight streaming through a range of windows on the wall opposite. MARY, LADY CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DACRES, ALICE. QUEEN pacing the Gallery. A writing-table in front. QUEEN comes to the table and writes and goes again, pacing the Gallery.

Lady Clarence. Mine eyes are dim: what hath she written? read.

Alice. "I am dying, Philip; come to me."

Lady Magdalen. There—up and down, poor lady, up and down.

Alice. And how her shadow crosses one by one

The moonlight casements pattern'd on the wall,

Following her like her sorrow. She turns again.

[Queen sits and writes, and goes again.]

Lady Clarence. What hath she written now?

Alice. Nothing; but "come, come, come," and all awry, And blotted by her tears. This cannot last.

[Queen returns.]

Mary. I whistle to the bird has broken cage,

And all in vain. [Sitting down.] Calais gone—Guisnes gone, too—and Philip gone!

Lady Clarence. Dear Madam, Philip is but at the wars;

I cannot doubt but that he comes again;

And he is with you in a measure still. I never look'd upon so fair a likeness As your great King in armor there,

his hand

Upon his helmet.

[Pointing to the portrait of Philip on the wall.]

Mary. Doth he not look noble? I had heard of him in battle over seas,

And I would have my warrior all in arms.

He said it was not courtly to stand helmed Before the Queen. He had his gracious moment,

Altho' you'll not believe me. How he smiles
As if he loved me yet!

Lady Clarence. And so he does.

Mary. He never loved me—nay, he could not love me.

It was his father's policy against France.

I am eleven years older than he, Poor boy! [Weeps.]

Alice. That was a lusty boy of twenty-seven; [Aside.]

Poor enough in God's grace!

Mary. — And all in vain!

The Queen of Scots is married to the Dauphin,

And Charles, the lord of this low world, is gone;

And all his wars and wisdoms past away;

And in a moment I shall follow him.

Lady Clarence. Nay, dearest Lady, see your good physician.

Mary. Drugs—but he knows they cannot help me—says

That rest is all—tells me I must not think—

That I must rest—I shall rest by and by.

Catch the wild cat, cage him, and when he springs

And maims himself against the bars, say "rest":

Why, you must kill him if you would have him rest—

Dead or alive you cannot make him happy.

Lady Clarence. Your Majesty has lived so pure a life,

And done such mighty things by Holy Church,

I trust that God will make you happy yet.

Mary. What is the strange thing happiness? Sit down here:

Tell me thine happiest hour.

Lady Clarence. I will, if that

May make your Grace forget yourself
a little.

There runs a shallow brook across our
field

For twenty miles, where the black
crow flies five,
And doth so bound and babble all the
way

As if itself were happy. It was May-
time,

And I was walking with the man I
loved.

I loved him, but I thought I was not
loved.

And both were silent, letting the wild
brook

Speak for us—till he stoop'd and
gather'd one

From out a bed of thick forget-me-nots,
Look'd hard and sweet at me, and
gave it me.

I took it, tho' I did not know I took it,
And put it in my bosom, and all at
once.

I felt his arms about me, and his lips—
Mary. O God! I have been too
slack, too slack;

There are Hot Gospellers even among
our guards—

Nobles we dared not touch. We have
but burnt

The heretic priest, workmen, and
women and children.

Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm,
wreck, wrath,—

We have so play'd the coward; but by
God's grace,

We'll follow Philip's leading, and set
up

The Holy Office here—garner the
wheat,

And burn the tares with unquenchable
fire!

Burn!—
Pic, what a savor! tell the cooks to
close

The doors of all the offices below.
Latimer!

Sir, we are private with our women
here—

Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly
fellow—

Thou light a torch that never will go
out!

"Tis out—mine flames. Women, the
Holy Father

Has ta'en the legateship from our
cousin Pole—

Was that well done? and poor Pole
pines of it,

As I do, to the death. I am but a
woman,

I have no power.—Ah, weak and
meek old man,

Seven-fold dishonor'd even in the
sight.

Of thine own sectaries—No, no. No
pardon!—

Why that was false: there is the right
hand still

Beckons me hence.

Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not for
treason,

Remember that! 'twas I and Bonner
did it,

And Pole; we are three to one—Have
you found mercy there,

Grant it me here: and see, he smiles
and goes,

Gentle as in life.

Alice. Madam, who goes? King
Philip?

Mary. No, Philip comes and goes,
but never goes.

Women, when I am dead,
Open my heart, and there you will
find written

Two names, Philip and Calais; open
his,—

So that he have one,—
You will find Philip only, policy, pol-
icy,—

Ay, worse than that—not one hour
true to me!

Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd
vice!

Adulterous to the very heart of Hell.
Hast thou a knife?

Alice. Ay, Madam, but o' God's
mercy—

Mary. Fool, think'st thou I would
peril mine own soul

By slaughter of the body? I could
not, girl,

Not this way — callous with a constant
stripe,
Unwoundable. The knife!

Alice. Take heed, take heed!
The blade is keen as death.

Mary. This Philip shall not
Stare in upon me in my haggardness;
Old, miserable, diseased,
Incapable of children. Come thou
down.

[*Cuts out the picture and throws it down.*
Lie there. (*Wails*) O God, I have
kill'd my Philip!

Alice. No,
Madam, you have but cut the canvas
out;
We can replace it.

Mary. All is well then; rest —
I will to rest; he said, I must have
rest. [*Cries of "Elizabeth" in
the street.*]

A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? revolt?

A new Northumberland, another
Wyatt?
I'll fight it on the threshold of the
grave.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your royal
sister comes to see you.

Mary. I will not see her.
Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be
my sister?

I will see none except the priest. Your
arm. [*To Lady Clarence.*]

O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet
worn smile

Among thy patient wrinkles — Help
me hence. [*Exeunt.*]

The PRIEST passes. Enter ELIZABETH
and SIR WILLIAM CECIL.

Elizabeth. Good counsel yours —
No one in waiting? still,
As if the chamberlain were Death
. himself!

The room she sleeps in — is not this
the way?

No, that way there are voices. Am I
too late?

Cecil . . . God guide me lest I lose
the way. [*Exit Elizabeth.*]

Cecil. Many points weather'd, many
perilous ones,

At last a harbor opens; but therein
Sunk rocks — they need fine steering
— much it is

To be nor mad, nor bigot — have a
mind —

Nor let the Priests talk, or dream of
worlds to be,
Miscolor things about her — sudden
touches

For him, or him — sunk rocks; no
passionate faith —

But — if let be — balance and com-
promise;

Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her
— a Tudor

School'd by the shadow of death — a
Boleyn, too,

Glancing across the Tudor — not so
well.

Enter ALICE.

How is the good Queen now?

Alice. Away from Philip.
Back in her childhood — prattling to
her mother

Of her betrothal to the Emperor
Charles,
And childlike-jealous of him again —
and once

She thank'd her father sweetly for his
book
Against that godless German. Ah,
those days

Were happy. It was never merry
world

In England, since the Bible came
among us.

Cecil. And who says that?
Alice. It is a saying among the
Catholics.

Cecil. It never will be merry world
in England,
Till all men have their Bible, rich and
poor.

Alice. The Queen is dying, or you
dare not say it.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth. The Queen is dead.

Cecil. Then here she stands! my
homage.

Elizabeth. She knew me, and acknowledged me her heir,
Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep the Faith;
Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away in peace.
I left her lying still and beautiful,
More beautiful than in life. Why would you vex yourself,
Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no heart
To be your Queen. To reign is restless fence,
Tieree, quart, and trickery. Peace is with the dead.
Her life was winter, for her spring was nipt:
And she loved much: pray God she be forgiven.
Cecil. Peace with the dead, who never were at peace!

Yet she loved one so much — I needs must say —
That never English monarch dying left England so little.

Elizabeth. But with Cecil's aid
And others, if our person be secured
From traitor stabs — we will make England great.

Enter PAGET, and other LORDS OF THE COUNCIL, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, etc.

Lords. God save Elizabeth, the Queen of England!

Bagenhall. God save the Crown! the Papacy is no more.

Paget (aside). Are we so sure of that?

Acclamation. God save the Queen!

HAROLD:

A DRAMA.

To HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTTON,

Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

MY DEAR LORD LYTTTON,—After old-world records—such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou,—Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his "Harold" to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my "Harold" to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876.

A GARDEN here—May breath and bloom of spring—
The cuckoo wonder from an English elm
Crying "with my false egg I overwhelm
The native nest;" and fancy hears the ring
Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,
And Saxon battleaxe clang on Norman helm.
Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm:
Here fought, here fell, our Norman slander'd king.
O Garden blossoming out of English blood!
O strange hate-healer Time! We stroll and stare
Where might made right eight hundred years ago;
Might, right? ay good, so all things make for good—
But he and he, if soul be soul, are where
Each stands full face with all he did below.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

STIGAND, created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.

ALDRED, Archbishop of York. THE NORMAN BISHOP OF LONDON.

HAROLD, Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England

TOSTIG, Earl of Northumbria

GURTH, Earl of East Anglia

LEOFWIN, Earl of Kent and Essex

WULFNOTH

COUNT WILLIAM OF NORMANDY.

WILLIAM MALET, a Norman Noble.

EDWIN, Earl of Mercia

MORCAR, Earl of Northumbria after Tostig } Sons of Alfgar of

GAMEL, a Northumbrian Thane.

ROLF, a Ponthieu Fisherman.

OSGOD and ATHELRIC, Canons from Waltham.

THE QUEEN, Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.

ALDWYTH, Daughter of Alfgar and Widow of Griffyth, King of Wales.

EDITH, Ward of King Edward.

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of Waltham,
Fishermen, etc.

Sons of
Godwin.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

{ Sons of Alfgar of

Mercia.

GEY, Count of Ponthieu.

HUGH MARGOT, a Norman Monk.

1 . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus
Comptar Heraldi. (*Guy of Amiens*, 587.)

ACT I.

SCENE I.—LONDON. THE KING'S PALACE.

(A comet seen through the open window.)

ALDWYTH, GAMES, COURTIERS talking together.

First Courtier. Lo! there once more
—this is the seventh night!
You grimly-glaring, treble-brandish'd
scourge
Of England!

Second Courtier. Horrible!

First Courtier. Look you, there's
a star

That dances in it as mad with agony!

Third Courtier. Ay, like a spirit in
Hell who skips and flies
To right and left, and cannot seape
the flame.

Second Courtier. Steam'd upward
from the undescendable
Abyss.

First Courtier. Or floated downward
from the throne
Of God Almighty.

Aldwyth. Games, son of Orm,
What thinkest thou this means?

Gamel. War, my dear lady!

Aldwyth. Doth this affright thee?

Gamel. Mightily, my dear lady!

Aldwyth. Stand by me then, and
look upon my face,
Not on the comet.

(Enter MORCAR.)

Morcar. Brother! why so pale?

Morcar. It glares in heaven, it
flares upon the Thames,
The people are as thick as bees below,
They hum like bees,—they cannot
speak—for awe;
Look to the skies, then to the river,
strike
Their hearts, and hold their babies up
to it.

I think that they would Molochize
them too,
To have the heavens clear.

Aldwyth. They fright not me.

(Enter LEOFWIN, after him GURTH.)

Ask thou Lord Leofwin what he
thinks of this!

Morcar. Lord Leofwin, dost thou
believe, that these
Three rods of blood-red fire up yon-
der mean
The doom of England and the wrath
of Heaven?

Bishop of London (passing). Did ye
not cast with bestial violence
Our holy Norman bishops down from
all
Their thrones in England? I alone
remain.

Why should not Heaven be wroth?

Leofwin. With us, or thee?

Bishop of London. Did ye not out-
law your archbishop Robert,
Robert of Jumiéges—well-nigh mur-
der him too?

Is there no reason for the wrath of
Heaven?

Leofwin. Why then the wrath of
Heaven hath three tails,
The devil only one.

[Exit Bishop of London.]

(Enter ARCHBISHOP STIGAND.)

Ask our Archbishop.
Stigand should know the purposes of
Heaven.

Stigand. Not I. I cannot read the
face of heaven;
Perhaps our vines will grow the better
for it.

Leofwin (laughing). He can but read
the king's face on his coins.

Stigand. Ay, ay, young lord, there
the king's face is power.

Gurth. O father, mock not at a
public fear,
But tell us, is this pendent hell in
heaven

A harm to England?

Stigand. Ask it of King Edward!
And he may tell thee, I am a harm to
England.

Old uncanonical Stigand — ask of me

Who had my pallium from an Anti-pope!

Not he the man — for in our windy world

What's up is faith, what's down is heresy.

Our friends, the Normans, help to shake his chair.

I have a Norman fever on me, son,
And cannot answer sanely . . . What it means?

Ask our broad Earl.

[*Pointing to HAROLD, who enters.*
Harold (seeing Gamel). Hail, Gamel, son of Orm!

Albeit no rolling stone, my good friend Gamel,

Thou hast rounded since we met.
Thy life at home

Is easier than mine here. Look! am I not

Work-wan, flesh-fallen?

Gamel. Art thou sick, good Earl?

Harold. Sick as an autumn swallow for a voyage,
Sick for an idle week of hawk and hound

Beyond the seas — a change! When camest thou hither?

Gamel. To-day, good Earl.

Harold. Is the North quiet, Gamel?

Gamel. Nay, there be murmurs, for thy brother breaks us

With over-taxing — quiet, ay, as yet — Nothing as yet.

Harold. Stand by him, mine old friend,

Thou art a great voice in Northumberland!

Advise him: speak him sweetly, he will hear thee.

He is passionate but honest. Stand thou by him!

More talk of this to-morrow, if yon weird sign

Not blast us in our dreams.— Well, father Stigand —

[*To Stigand, who advances to him.*
Stigand (pointing to the comet). War there, my son? is that the doom of England?

Harold. Why not the doom of all the world as well?

For all the world sees it as well as England.

These meteors came and went before our day,

Not harming any: it threatens us no more

Than French or Norman. War? the worst that follows

Things that seem'd jerk'd out of the common rut

Of Nature is the hot religious fool,
Who, seeing war in heaven, for heaven's credit

Makes it on earth: but look, where Edward draws

A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tostig.

He hath learnt to love our Tostig much of late.

Leafwin. And he hath learnt, despite the tiger in him,
To sleek and supple himself to the king's hand.

Gurth. I trust the kingly touch that cures the evil

May serve to charm the tiger out of him.

Leafwin. He hath as much of cat as tiger in him.

Our Tostig loves the hand and not the man.

Harold. Nay! Better die than lie!

Enter KING, QUEEN, and TOSTIG.

Edward. In heaven signs!
Signs upon earth! signs everywhere!

your Priests
Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd!
They scarce can read their Psalter;

and your churches
Uncouth, unhandsome, while in Nor-

manland
God speaks thro' abler voices, as He dwells

In statelier shrines. I say not this, as being

Half Norman-blooded, nor as some have held,

Because I love the Norman better — no,

But dreading God's revenge upon this realm
 For narrowness and coldness: and I say it
 For the last time perchance, before I go
 To find the sweet refreshment of the Saints.
 I have lived a life of utter purity:
 I have builded the great church of Holy Peter:
 I have wrought miracles — to God the glory —
 And miracles will in my name be wrought
 Hereafter. — I have fought the fight and go —
 I see the flashing of the gates of pearl —
 And it is well with me, tho' some of you
 Have scorn'd me — ay — but after I am gone
 Woe, woe to England! I have had a vision;
 The seven sleepers in the cave at Ephesus
 Have turn'd from right to left.
Harold. My most dear Master,
 What matters? let them turn from left to right
 And sleep again.
Tostig. Too hardy with thy king!
 A life of prayer and fasting well may see
 Deeper into the mysteries of heaven
 Than thou, good brother.
Aldwyth (aside). Sees he into thine,
 That thou wouldest have his promise for the crown?
Edward. Tostig says true; my son, thou art too hard,
 Not stagger'd by this ominous earth and heaven:
 But heaven and earth are threads of the same loom,
 Play into one another, and weave the web
 That may confound thee yet.
Harold. Nay, I trust not, For I have served thee long and honestly,

Edward. I know it, son; I am not thankless: thou hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for me
 The weight of this poor crown, and left me time
 And peace for prayer to gain a better one.
 Twelve years of service! England loves thee for it.
 Thou art the man to rule her!
Aldwyth (aside). So, not Tostig?
Harold. And after those twelve years a boon, my king,
 Respite, a holiday: thyself wast wont
 To love the chase: thy leave to set my feet
 On board, and hunt and hawk beyond the seas!
Edward. What with this flaming horror overhead?
Harold. Well, when it passes then.
Edward. Ay, if it pass. Go not to Normandy — go not to Normandy.
Harold. And wherefore not, my king, to Normandy?
 Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage there
 For my dead father's loyalty to thee?
 I pray thee, let me hence and bring him home.
Edward. Not thee, my son: some other messenger.
Harold. And why not me, my lord, to Normandy?
 Is not the Norman Count thy friend and mine?
Edward. I pray thee, do not go to Normandy.
Harold. Because my father drove the Normans out
 Of England? — That was many a summer gone —
 Forgotten and forgiven by them and thee.
Edward. Harold, I will not yield thee leave to go.
Harold. Why then to Flanders. I will hawk and hunt
 In Flanders.

Edward. Be there not fair woods
and fields
In England? Wilful, wilful. Go —
the Saints
Pilot and prosper all thy wandering
out
And homeward. Tostig, I am faint
again.
Son Harold, I will in and pray for
thee.

[Exit, leaning on Tostig, and followed by Stigand, Morcar, and Courtiers.]

Harold. What lies upon the mind of
our good king
That he should harp this way on
Normandy?

Queen. Brother, the king is wiser
than he seems;
And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves
the king.

Harold. And love should know; and
— be the king so wise,—
Then Tostig too were wiser than he
seems.

I love the man but not his phantasies.

(Re-enter TOSTIG.)

Well, brother,
When didst thou hear from thy
Northumbria?

Tostig. When did I hear aught but
this "When" from thee?
Leave me alone, brother, with my
Northumbria:

She is *my* mistress, let *me* look to her!
The King hath made me Earl; make
me not fool!
Nor make the King a fool, who made
me Earl!

Harold. No, Tostig — lest I make
myself a fool
Who made the King who made thee,
make thee Earl.

Tostig. Why chafe me then? Thou
knowest I soon go wild.
Gurth. Come, come! as yet thou art
not gone so wild
But thou canst hear the best and
wisest of us.

Harold. So says old Gurth, not I:
yet heari thine earldom,

Tostig, hath been a kingdom. Their
old crown
Is yet a force among them, a sun
set
But leaving light enough for Alfgar's
house
To strike thee down by — nay, this
ghastly glare
May heat their fancies.

Tostig. My most worthy brother,
Thou art the quietest man in all the
world —
Ay, ay and wise in peace and great in
war —
Pray God the people choose thee for
their king!
But all the powers of the house of
Godwin

Are not enframed in thee.

Harold. Thank the Saints, no!
But thou hast drain'd them shallow
by thy tolls,
And thou art ever here about the
King:
Thine absence well may seem a want
of care.
Cling to their love; for, now the sons
of Godwin
Sit topmost in the field of England,
envy,
Like the rough bear beneath the tree,
good brother,
Waits till the man let go.

Tostig. Good counsel truly!
I heard from my Northumbria yester-
day.

Harold. How goes it then with thy
Northumbria? Well?

Tostig. And wouldest thou that it
went aught else than well?

Harold. I would it went as well as
with mine earldom,
Leofwin's and Gurth's.

Tostig. Ye govern milder men
Gurth. We have made them milder
by just government.

Tostig. Ay, ever give yourselves
your own good word.

Leofwin. An honest gift, by all the
Saints, if giver
And taker be but honest! but they
bribe

Each other, and so often, an honest world

Will not believe them.

Harold. I may tell thee, Tostig, I heard from thy Northumberland to-day.

Tostig. From spies of thine to spy my nakedness

In my poor North!

Harold. There is a movement there, A blind one — nothing yet.

Tostig. Crush it at once With all the power I have! — I must — I will! —

Crush it half-born! Fool still? or wisdom there,

My wise head-shaking Harold?

Harold. Make not thou The nothing something. Wisdom when in power And wisest, should not frown as Power, but smile

As kindness, watching all, till the true must

Shall make her strike as Power: but when to strike —

O Tostig, O dear brother — If they prance,

Rein in, not lash them, lest they rear and run,

And break both neck and axle.

Tostig. Good again! Good counsel tho' scarce needed. Pour not water

In the full vessel running out at top

To swamp the house.

Leofwin. Nor thou be a wild thing Out of the waste, to turn and bite the hand

Would help thee from the trap.

Tostig. Thou playest in tune.

Leofwin. To the deaf adder thee, that wilt not dance

However wisely charm'd.

Tostig. No more, no more!

Gurth. I likewise cry "no more." Unwholesome talk

For Godwin's house! Leofwin, thou hast a tongue!

Tostig, thou look'st as thou wouldst spring upon him.

St. Olaf, not while I am by! Come, come,

Join hands, let brethren dwell in unity; Let kith and kin stand close as our shield-wall,

Who breaks us then? I say, thou hast a tongue,

And Tostig is not stout enough to bear it.

Vex him not, Leofwin.

Tostig. No, I am not vexed, — Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all. I have to make report of my good earldom

To the good king who gave it — not to you —

Not any of you. — I am not vexed at all.

Harold. The king? the king is ever at his prayers;

In all that handles matter of the state

I am the king.

Tostig. That shalt thou never be If I can thwart thee.

Harold. Brother, brother!

Tostig. Away! [Exit Tostig.

Queen. Spite of this grisly star ye three must gall

Poor Tostig.

Leofwin. Tostig, sister, galls himself;

He cannot smell a rose but pricks his nose

Against the thorn, and rails against the rose.

Queen. I am the only rose of all the stock

That never thorn'd him; Edward loves him, so

Ye hate him. Harold always hated him.

Why — how they fought when boys — and, Holy Mary!

How Harold used to beat him!

Harold. Why, boys will fight. Leofwin would often fight me, and I beat him.

Even old Gurth would fight. I had much ado

To hold mine own against old Gurth. Old Gurth,

We fought like great states for grave cause; but Tostig —
On a sudden — at a something — for a nothing —
The boy would fist me hard, and when we fought
I conquer'd, and he loved me none the less,
Till thou wouldest get him all apart, and tell him
That where he was but worsted, he was wrong'd.
Ah! thou hast taught the king to spoil him too;
Now the spoilt child sways both. Take heed, take heed;
Thou art the Queen; ye are boy and girl no more:
Side not with Tostig in any violence,
Lest thou be sideways guilty of the violence.

Queen. Come fall not foul on me.
I leave thee, brother.

Harold. Nay, my good sister —
[Exeunt Queen, Harold, Gurth, and Leofwin.

Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,
What thinkest thou this means?

[Pointing to the comet.]

Gamel. War, my dear lady,
War, waste, plague, famine, all malignities.

Aldwyth. It means the fall of Tostig from his earldom.

Gamel. That were too small a matter for a comet!

Aldwyth. It means the lifting of the house of Alfgar.

Gamel. Too small! a comet would not show for that!

Aldwyth. Not small for thee, if thou canst compass it.

Gamel. Thy love?

Aldwyth. As much as I can give thee, man;

This Tostig is, or like to be, a tyrant;
Stir up thy people: oust him!

Gamel. And thy love?

Aldwyth. As much as thou canst bear.

Gamel. I can bear all,
And not be giddy.

Aldwyth. No more now; to-morrow.

SCENE II.—IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE NEAR LONDON. SUNSET.

Edith. Mad for thy mate, passionate nightingale . . .
I love thee for it — ay, but stay a moment;
He can but stay a moment: he is going.
I fain would hear him coming! . . .
near me . . . near,
Somewhere — To draw him nearer with a charm
Like thine to thine.

(Singing.)

Love is come with a song and a smile,
Welcome Love with a smile and a song:
Love can stay but a little while.
Why cannot he stay? They call him away:
Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong;
Love will stay for a whole life long.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. The nightingales at Havering-in-the-bower
Sang out their loves so loud, that Edward's prayers
Were deafen'd and he pray'd them dumb, and thus
I dumb thee too, my wingless nightingale!

[Kissing her.]
Edith. Thou art my music! Would their wings were mine
To follow thee to Flanders! Must thou go?

Harold. Not must, but will. It is but for one moon.

Edith. Leaving so many foes in Edward's hall
To league against thy weal. The Lady Aldwyth

Was here to-day, and when she touch'd on thee,
She stammer'd in her hate; I am sure she hates thee,

Pants for thy blood.

Harold. Well, I have given her cause —
I fear no woman.

Edith. Hate not one who felt
Some pity for thy hater! I am sure
Her morning wanted sunlight, she so
praised
The convent and lone life — within
the pale —
Beyond the passion. Nay — she held
with Edward,
At least methought she held with holy
Edward,
That marriage was half sin.

Harold. A lesson worth
Finger and thumb — thus (*snaps his
fingers*). And my answer to it —
See here — an interwoven H and E!
Take thou this ring; I will demand
his ward
From Edward when I come again.
Ay, would she?
She to shut up my blossom in the dark!
Thou art my nun, thy cloister in mine
arms.

Edith (taking the ring). Yea, but
Earl Tostig —

Harold. That's a truer fear!
For if the North take fire, I should be
back;

I shall be, soon enough.

Edith. Ay, but last night
An evil dream that ever came and
went —

Harold. A gnat that vexed thy pil-
low! Had I been by,
I would have spoil'd his horn. My
girl, what was it?

Edith. Oh! that thou wert not go-
ing!
For so methought it was our marriage-
morn,
And while we stood together, a dead
man

Rose from behind the altar, tore away
My marriage ring, and rent my bridal
veil;

And then I turn'd, and saw the church
all fill'd

With dead men upright from their
graves, and all

The dead men made at thee to murder
thee,

But thou didst back thyself against a
pillar,

And strike among them with thy bat-
tle-axe —

There, what a dream!

Harold. Well, well — a dream —
no more!

Edith. Did not Heaven speak to
men in dreams of old?

Harold. Ay — well — of old. I
tell thee what, my child;
Thou hast misread this merry dream
of thine,

Taken the rifted pillars of the wood
For smooth stone columns of the sanc-
tuary,

The shadows of a hundred fat dead deer
For dead men's ghosts. True, that the
battle-axe

Was out of place; it should have been
the bow —

Come, thou shalt dream no more such
dreams; I swear it,

By mine own eyes — and these two
sapphires — these

Twin rubies, that are amulets against all
The kisses of all kind of womankind
In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me
back

To tumble at thy feet.

Edith. That would but shame me,
Rather than make me vain. The sea
may roll

Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the liv-
ing rock

Which guards the land.

Harold. Except it be a soft one,
And underaten to the fall. Mine
amulet . . .

This last . . . upon thine eyelids, to
shut in

A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and
thou shalt see
My greyhounds fleeting like a beam
of light,

And hear my peregrine and her bells
in heaven;

And other bells on earth, which yet
are heaven's;

Guess what they be.

Edith. He cannot guess who knows.
Farewell, my king.

Harold. Not yet, but then — my
queen. [Exeunt.

Morcar. But thunder may bring down
That which the flash hath stricken.
Aldwyth. Down with Tostig !
That first of all.—And when doth Harold go ?
Morcar. To-morrow — first to Bosham, then to Flanders.
Aldwyth. Not to come back till Tostig shall have shown And redd'n'd with his people's blood the teeth That shall be broken by us — yea, and thou Chair'd in his place. Good-night, and dream thyself Their chosen Earl. [Exit Aldwyth.
Morcar. Earl first, and after that Who knows I may not dream myself their king !

ACT II.

SCENE I.—SEASHORE. PONTHIEU.
NIGHT.

HAROLD and his Men, wrecked.
Harold. Friends, in that last inhospitable plunge Our boat hath burst her ribs ; but ours are whole ; I have but bark'd my hands.
Attendant. I dug mine into My old fast friend the shore, and clinging thus Felt the remorseless outdraught of the deep Haul like a great strong fellow at my legs, And then I rose and ran. The blast that came So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly — Put thou the comet and this blast together —
Harold. Put thou thyself and mother-wit together. Be not a fool !

(Enter Fishermen with torches, HAROLD going up to one of them, ROLF.)

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp ! Wolf of the shore ! dog, with thy lying lights Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks of thine !

Rolf. Ay, but thou liest as loud as the black herring-pond behind thee. We be fishermen ; I came to see after my nets.

Harold. To drag us into them. Fishermen ? devils ! Who, while ye fish for men with your false fires, Let the great Devil fish for your own souls.

Rolf. Nay then, we be liker the blessed Apostles ; they were fishers of men, Father Jean says.

Harold. I had liefer that the fish had swallowed me, Like Jonah, than have known there were such devils. What's to be done ?

[To his Men—goes apart with them.
Fisherman. Rolf, what fish did swallow Jonah ?

Rolf. A whale !
Fisherman. Then a whale to a whelk we have swallowed the King of England. I saw him over there. Look thee, Rolf, when I was down in the fever, she was down with the hunger, and thou didst stand by her and give her thy crabs, and set her up again, till now, by the patient Saints, she's as crabb'd as ever.

Rolf. And I'll give her my crabs again, when thou art down again.

Fisherman. I thank thee, Rolf. Run thou to Count Guy ; he is hard at hand. Tell him what hath crept into our creel, and he will fee thee as freely as he will wrench this outlander's ransom out of him — and why not ? for what right had he to get himself wrecked on another man's land ?

Rolf. Thou art the human-heartedest, Christian-charitiest of all crab-catchers. Share and share alike !

[Exit.]

Harold (to Fisherman). Fellow, dost thou catch crabs ?

Fisherman. As few as I may in a wind, and less than I would in a calm. Ay!

Harold. I have a mind that thou shalt catch no more.

Fisherman. How?

Harold. I have a mind to brain thee with mine axe.

Fisherman. Ay, do, do, and our great Count-crab will make his nippers meet in thine heart ; he'll sweat it out of thee, he'll sweat it out of thee. Look, he's here ! He'll speak for himself ! Hold thine own, if thou canst !

Enter GUY, COUNT OF PONTHIEU.

Harold. Guy, Count of Ponthieu ?

Guy. Harold, Earl of Wessex !

Harold. Thy villains with their lying lights have wreck'd us !

Guy. Art thou not Earl of Wessex ?

Harold. In mine earldom A man may hang gold bracelets on a bush,

And leave them for a year, and coming back

Find them again.

Guy. Thou art a mighty man In thine own earldom !

Harold. Were such murderous liars In Wessex — if I caught them, they should hang

Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks ; our seamew

Winging their only wail !

Guy. Ay, but my men Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed of God ; —

What hinders me to hold with mine own men ?

Harold. The Christian manhood of the man who reigns !

Guy. Ay, rave thy worst, but in our oublieettes

Thou shalt or rot or ransom. Hale him hence !

[To one of his Attendants.
Fly thou to William; tell him we have Harold.

SCENE II.—BAYEUX. PALACE.

COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM MALET.

William. We hold our Saxon wood-cock in the springe,

But he begins to flutter. As I think He was thine host in England when I went

To visit Edward.

Malet. Yea, and there, my lord, To make allowance for their rougher fashions,

I found him all a noble host should be.

William. Thou art his friend : thou know'st my claim on England Thro' Edward's promise : we have him in the toils.

And it were well, if thou shouldst let him feel,

How dense a fold of danger nets him round,

So that he bristle himself against my will.

Malet. What would I do, my lord, if I were you ?

William. What wouldst thou do ?

Malet. My lord, he is thy guest.

William. Nay, by the splendor of God, no guest of mine. He came not to see me, had past me by

To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save for the fate

Which hunted him when that un-Saxon blast,

And bolts of thunder moulded in high heaven

To serve the Norman purpose, drove and crack'd

His boat on Ponthieu beach ; where our friend Guy

Had wrung his ransom from him by the rack,

But that I stept between and purchased him,

Translating his captivity from Guy To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where he sits
My ransom'd prisoner.

Malet. Well, if not with gold,

With golden deeds and iron strokes
that brought
Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier
close
Than else had been, he paid his ran-
son back.

William. So that henceforth they
are not like to league
With Harold against me.

Malet. A marvel, how
He from the liquid sands of Coesnon
Haled thy shore-swallow'd, armor'd
Normans up

To fight for thee again!

William. Perchance against
Their saver, save thou save him from
himself.

Malet. But I should let him home
again, my lord.

William. Simple! let fly the bird
within the hand,
To catch the bird again within the
bush!

No.
Smooth thou my way, before he clash
with me;
I want his voice in England for the
crown,
I want thy voice with him to bring him
round;
And being brave he must be subtly
cow'd,
And being truthful wrought upon to
swear
Vows that he dare not break. Eng-
land our own
Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my
dear friend
As well as thine, and thou thyself
shalt have
Large lordship there of lands and ter-
ritory.

Malet. I knew thy purpose; he and
Wulfnoth never
Have met, except in public; shall
they meet
In private? I have often talk'd with
Wulfnoth,
And stuff'd the boy with fears that
these may act
On Harold when they meet.

William. Then let them meet!

'

Malet. I can but love this noble,
honest Harold.

William. Love him! why not?
thine is a loving office,
I have commission'd thee to save the
man:
Help the good ship, showing the
sunken rock,
Or he is wreckt for ever.

Enter WILLIAM RUFUS.

William Rufus. Father.

William. Well, boy.

William Rufus. They have taken
away the toy thou gavest me,
The Norman knight.

William. Why, boy?

William Rufus. Because I broke
The horse's leg — it was mine own to
break;
I like to have my toys, and break them
too.

William. Well, thou shalt have
another Norman knight!

William Rufus. And may I break
his legs?

William. Yea, — get thee gone!

William Rufus. I'll tell them I have
had my way with thee. [Exit.]

Malet. I never knew thee check thy
will for ought

Save for the prattling of thy little ones.

William. Who shall be kings of
England. I am heir

Of England by the promise of her king.

Malet. But there the great As-
sembly choose their king,
The choice of England is the voice of
England.

William. I will be king of England
by the laws,

The choice, and voice of England.

Malet. Can that be?

William. The voice of any people
is the sword

That guards them, or the sword that
beats them down.

Here comes the would-be what I will
be . . . kinglike . . .

Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our
meshes break,

More kinglike he than like to prove a king.

(Enter HAROLD, musing, with his eyes on the ground.)

He sees me not — and yet he dreams of me.

Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair day?

They are of the best, strong-wing'd against the wind.

Harold (looking up suddenly, having caught but the last word). Which way does it blow?

William. Blowing for England, ha?

Not yet. Thou hast not learnt thy quarters here.

The winds so cross and jostle among these towers.

Harold. Count of the Normans, thou hast ransom'd us,

Maintain'd, and entertain'd us royally!

William. And thou for us hast fought as loyally, Which binds us friendship-fast for ever!

Harold. Good! But lest we turn the scale of courtesy By too much pressure on it, I would fain,

Since thou has promised Wulfnoth home with us,

Be home again with Wulfnoth.

William. Stay — as yet Thou hast but seen how Norman hands can strike, But walk'd our Norman field, scarce touch'd or tasted

The splendors of our Court.

Harold. I am in no mood: I should be as the shadow of a cloud Crossing your light.

William. Nay, rest a week or two, And we will fill thee full of Norman sun,

And send thee back among thine island mists

With laughter.

Harold. Count, I thank thee, but had rather

Breathe the free wind from off our Saxon downs,

Tho' charged with all the wet of all the west.

William. Why if thou wilt, so let it be — thou shalt.

That were a graceless hospitality To chain the free guest to the banquet-board;

To-morrow we will ride with thee to Harfleur,

And see thee shipt, and pray in thy behalf

For happier homeward winds than that which crack'd

Thy bark at Ponthieu, — yet to us, in faith,

A happy one — whereby we came to know

Thy valor and thy value, noble earl. Ay, and perchance a happy one for thee,

Provided — I will go with thee to-morrow —

Nay — but there be conditions, easy ones,

So thou, fair friend, will take them easily.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord, there is a post from over seas

With news for thee. [Exit Page.]

William. Come, Malet, let us hear! [Exeunt Count William and Malet.]

Harold. Conditions? What conditions? pay him back

His ransom? "easy" — that were easy — nay —

No money-lover he! What said the King?

"I pray you do not go to Normandy." And fate hath blown me hither, bound

me too

With bitter obligation to the Count — Have I not fought it out? What did he mean?

There lodged a gleaming grimness in his eyes,

Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls oppress me,

And yon huge keep that hinders half
the heaven.

Free air! free field!

[*Moves to go out. A Man-at-arms follows him.*

Harold (to the Man-at-arms). I need
thee not. Why dost thou fol-
low me?

Man-at-arms. I have the Count's
commands to follow thee.

Harold. What then? Am I in dan-
ger in this court?

Man-at-arms. I cannot tell. I have
the Count's commands.

Harold. Stand out of earshot then,
and keep me still

In eyeshot.

Man-at-arms. Yea, Lord Harold.
[*Withdraws.*

Harold. And arm'd men
Ever keep watch beside my chamber
door,
And if I walk within the lonely wood,
There is an arm'd man ever glides be-
hind!

(Enter MALET.)

Why am I follow'd, haunted, harass'd,
watch'd?

See yonder!

[*Pointing to the Man-at-arms.*

Malet. 'Tis the good Count's care
for thee!

The Normans love thee not, nor thou
the Normans,

Or — so they deem.

Harold. But wherefore is the wind,
Which way soever the vane-arrow
swing,

Not ever fair for England? Why but
now

He said (thou heardst him) that I
must not hence

Save on conditions.

Malet. So in truth he said.

Harold. Malet, thy mother was an
Englishwoman;

There somewhere beats an English
pulse in thee!

Malet. Well — for my mother's
sake I love your England,
But for my father I love Normandy.

Harold. Speak for thy mother's
sake, and tell me true.

Malet. Then for my mother's sake,
and England's sake
That suffers in the daily want of
thee,
Obey the Count's conditions, my good
friend.

Harold. How, Malet, if they be not
honorable!

Malet. Seem to obey them.

Harold. Better die than lie!

Malet. Choose therefore whether
thou wilt have thy conscience
White as a maiden's hand, or whether
England

Be shatter'd into fragments.

Harold. News from England?

Malet. Morcar and Edwin have
stirr'd up the Thanes
Against thy brother Tostig's govern-
ance;

And all the North of Humber is one

storm.

Harold. I should be there, Malet, I
should be there!

Malet. And Tostig in his own hall
on suspicion

Hath massacred the Thane that was
his guest,

Gamel, the son of Orm: and there be
more

As villainously slain.

Harold. The wolf! the beast!
Ill news for guests, ha, Malet! More?
What more?

What do they say? did Edward know
of this?

Malet. They say, his wife was know-
ing and abetting.

Harold. They say, his wife! — To
marry and have no husband
Makes the wife fool. My God, I
should be there.

I'll hack my way to the sea.

Malet. Thou canst not, Harold;
Our Duke is all between thee and the
sea,

Our Duke is all about thee like a God;
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak
him fair,
For he is only debonair to those

That follow where he leads, but stark
as death
To those that cross him.—Look thou,
here is Wulfnoth!
I leave thee to thy talk with him
alone;
How wan, poor lad! how sick and sad
for home! [Exit Malet.
Harold (muttering). Go not to Nor-
mandy — go not to Normandy!

(Enter WULFNOTH.)

Poor brother! still a hostage!

Wulfnoth. Yea, and I
Shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no
more
Make blush the maiden-white of our
tall cliffs,
Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself
and hover
Above the windy ripple, and fill the sky
With free sea-laughter — never —
save indeed
Thou canst make yield this iron-
mooded Duke
To let me go.

Harold. Why, brother, so he will;
But on conditions. Canst thou guess
at them?

Wulfnoth. Draw nearer,—I was in
the corridor,
I saw him coming with his brother Odo
The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.
Harold. They did thee wrong who
made thee hostage; thou
Wast ever fearful.

Wulfnoth. And he spoke — I
heard him —
“This Harold is not of the royal blood,
Can have no right to the crown,” and
Odo said,
“Thine is the right, for thine the
might; he is here,
And yonder is thy keep.”

Harold. No, Wulfnoth, no.
Wulfnoth. And William laugh'd and
swore that might was right,
Far as he knew in this poor world of
ours —
“Marry, the Saints must go along with
us,

And, brother, we will find a way,” said
he —

Yea, yea, he would be king of England.
Harold. Never!

Wulfnoth. Yea, but thou must not
this way answer him.

Harold. Is it not better still to
speak the truth?

Wulfnoth. Not here, or thou wilt
never hence nor I:

For in the racing toward this golden
goal

He turns not right or left, but tram-
ples flat

Whatever thwarts him; hast thou
never heard

His savagery at Alençon,—the town
Hung out raw hides along their walls,
and cried

“Work for the tanner.”

Harold. That had anger'd me
Had I been William.

Wulfnoth. Nay, but he had prison-
ers,

He tore their eyes out, sliced their
hands away,
And flung them streaming o'er the
battlements.

Upon the heads of those who walk'd
within —

O speak him fair, Harold, for thine
own sake.

Harold. Your Welshman says,
“The Truth against the
World,”

Much more the truth against myself.

Wulfnoth. Thyself?
But for my sake, oh brother! oh! for
my sake!

Harold. Poor Wulfnoth! do they
not entreat thee well?

Wulfnoth. I see the blackness of
my dungeon loom
Across their lamps of revel, and be-
yond

The merriest murmurings of their ban-
quet clank

The shackles that will bind me to the
wall.

Harold. Too fearful still!

Wulfnoth. Oh no, no—speak
him fair!

Call it to temporize ; and not to lie ;
Harold, I do not counsel thee to lie.
The man that bath to foil a murderous arm

May, surely, play with words.

Harold. Words are the man,
Not ev'n for thy sake, brother, would
I lie.

Wulfnoth. Then for thine Edith ?

Harold. There thou prick'st me
deep.

Wulfnoth. And for our Mother
England ?

Harold. Deeper still.

Wulfnoth. And deeper still the
deep-down oubliette,
Down thirty feet below the smiling
day —

In blackness — dogs' food thrown upon
thy head.

And over thee the suns arise and set,
And the lark sings, the sweet stars
come and go,

And men are at their markets, in their
fields,

And woo their loves and have forgot-
ten thee;

And thou art upright in thy living
grave,

Where there is barely room to shift
thy side,

And all thine England hath forgotten
thee;

And he our lazy-pious Norman King,
With all his Normans round him once
again,

Counts his old beads, and bath for-
gotten thee.

Harold. Thou art of my blood, and
so methinks, my boy,
Thy fears infect me beyond reason.
Peace !

Wulfnoth. And then our fiery Tos-
tig, while thy hands
Are palsied here, if his Northumbri-
ans rise

And hurl him from them, — I have
heard the Normans

Count upon this confusion — may he
not make

A league with William, so to bring
him back ?

Harold. That lies within the
shadow of the chance.

Wulfnoth. And like a river in flood
thro' a burst dam

Descends the ruthless Norman — our
good King
Kneels mumbling some old bone —
our helpless folk
Are wash'd away, wailing, in their
own blood —

Harold. Wailing ! not warring ?
Boy, thou hast forgotten

That thou art English.

Wulfnoth. Then our modest wo-

men —
I know the Norman license — thine
own Edith —

Harold. No more ! I will not hear
thee — William comes.

Wulfnoth. I dare not well be seen
in talk with thee.

Make thou not mention that I spake
with thee.

[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*

Enter WILLIAM, MALET, and Officer.

Officer. We have the man that
rail'd against thy birth.

William. Tear out his tongue.

Officer. He shall not rail again.
He said that he should see confusion
fall

On thee and on thine house.

William. Tear out his eyes,
And plunge him into prison.

Officer. It shall be done.

[*Exit Officer.*

William. Look not amazed, fair
earl ! Better leave undone
Than do by halves — tongueless and
eyeless, prison'd —

Harold. Better methinks have
slain the man at once !

William. We have respect for
man's immortal soul,
We seldom take man's life, except in
war ;

It frights the traitor more to maim
and blind.

Harold. In mine own land I should
have scorn'd the man,

Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him go.

William. And let him go? To slander thee again!

Yet in thine own land in thy father's day

They blinded my young kinsman, Alfred—ay,

Some said it was thy father's deed.

Harold. They lied.

William. But thou and he—whom at thy word, for thou

Art known a speaker of the truth, I free

From this foul charge—

Harold. Nay, nay, he freed himself By oath and compurgation from the charge.

The king, the lords, the people clear'd him of it.

William. But thou and he drove our good Normans out

From England, and this rankles in us yet.

Archbishop Robert hardly scaped with life.

Harold. Archbishop Robert! Robert the Archbishop!

Robert of Jumiéges, he that—

Malet. Quiet! quiet! Quiet!

Harold. Count! if there sat within the Norman chair

A ruler all for England—one who fill'd

All offices, all bishoprics with English—

We could not move from Dover to the Humber

Saving thro' Norman bishoprics—I say

Ye would applaud that Norman who should drive

The stranger to the fiends!

William. Why, that is reason! Warrior thou art, and mighty wise withal!

Ay, ay, but many among our Norman lords

Hate thee for this, and press upon me—saying

God and the sea have given thee to our hands—

To plunge thee into life-long prison here:—

Yet I hold out against them, as I may, Yea—would hold out, yea, tho' they should revolt—

For thou hast done the battle in my cause;

I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

Harold. I am doubly bound to thee . . . if this be so.

William. And I would bind thee more, and would myself Be bounden to thee more.

Harold. Then let me hence With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

William. So we will. We hear he hath not long to live.

Harold. It may be.

William. Why then the heir of England, who is he?

Harold. The Atheling is nearest to the throne.

William. But sickly, slight, half-witted and a child,

Will England have him king?

Harold. It may be, no.

William. And hath King Edward not pronounced his heir?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. When he was here in Normandy,

He loved us and we him, because we found him

A Norman of the Normans.

Harold. So did we.

William. A gentle, gracious, pure and saintly man!

And grateful to the hand that shielded him,

He promised that if ever he were king in England, he would give his kingly voice

To me as his successor. Knowest thou this?

Harold. I learn it now.

William. Thou knowest I am his cousin,

And that my wife descends from Alfred?

Harold. Ay.

William. Who hath a better claim then to the crown

So that ye will not crown the Atheling?

Harold. None that I know . . . if that but hung upon King Edward's will.

William. Wilt thou uphold my claim?

Malet (aside to Harold). Be careful of thine answer, my good friend.

Wulfneth (aside to Harold). Oh! Harold, for my sake and for thine own!

Harold. Ay . . . if the king have not revoked his promise.

William. But hath he done it then?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. Good, good, and thou wilt help me to the crown?

Harold. Ay . . . if the Witan will consent to this.

William. Thou art the mightiest voice in England, man. Thy voice will lead the Witan — shall I have it?

Wulfneth (aside to Harold). Oh! Harold, if thou lovesthine Edith, ay.

Harold. Ay, if —

Malet (aside to Harold). Thine "ifs" will sear thine eyes out — ay.

William. I ask thee, wilt thou help me to the crown?

And I will make thee my great Earl of Earls,

Foremost in England and in Normandy;

Thou shalt be verily king — all but the name —

For I shall most sojourn in Normandy;

And thou be my vice-king in England. Speak.

Wulfneth (aside to Harold). Ay, brother — for the sake of England — ay.

Harold. My lord —

Malet (aside to Harold). Take heed now.

Harold. Ay.

William. I am content,

For thou art truthful, and thy word thy bond.

To-morrow will we ride with thee to Harfleur. [Exit William.

Malet. Harold, I am thy friend, one life with thee, And even as I should bless thee saving mine,

I thank thee now for having saved thyself. [Exit Malet.

Harold. For having lost myself to save myself,

Said "ay" when I meant "no," lied like a lad

That dreads the pendent scourge, said "ay" for "no"!

Ay! No! — he hath net bound me by an oath —

Is "ay" an oath? is "ay" strong as an oath?

Or is it the same sin to break my word As break mine oath? He call'd my word my bond!

He is a liar who knows I am a liar, And makes me believe that he believes my word —

The crime be on his head — not bounden — no.

[Suddenly doors are flung open, discovering in an inner hall COUNT WILLIAM in his state robes, seated upon his throne, between two Bishops, ODO OF BAYEUX being one; in the centre of the hall an ark covered with cloth of gold; and on either side of it the Norman barons.

Enter a JAILOR before William's throne.

William (to Jailer). Knave, hast let thy prisoner scape?

Jailer. Sir Count, He had but one foot, he must have hopt away,

Yea, some familiar spirit must have help'd him.

William. Woe knave to thy familiar and to thee!

Give me thy keys. [They fall clashing. Nay let them lie. Stand there and wait my will.

[The Jailer stands aside.

William (to Harold). Hast thou such trustless jailors in thy North?

Harold. We have few prisoners in mine earldom there, So less chance for false keepers.

William. We have heard Of thy just, mild, and equal government; Honor to thee! thou art perfect in all honor!

Thy naked word thy bond! confirm it now

Before our gather'd Norman baronage, For they will not believe me—as I believe.

[*Descends from his throne and stands by the ark.*

Let all men here bear witness of our bond!

[*Beckons to Harold, who advances.*

Enter MALET behind him.

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden pall!

Behold the jewel of St. Pancratius Woven into the gold. Swear thou on this!

Harold. What should I swear? Why should I swear on this?

William (savagely). Swear thou to help me to the crown of England.

Malet (whispering Harold). My friend, thou hast gone too far to palter now.

Wulfnoth (whispering Harold). Swear thou to-day, to-morrow is thine own.

Harold. I swear to help thee to the crown of England . . .

According as King Edward promises.

William. Thou must swear absolutely, noble Earl.

Malet (whispering). Delay is death to thee, ruin to England.

Wulfnoth (whispering). Swear, dearest brother, I beseech thee, swear!

Harold (putting his hand on the jewel). I swear to help thee to the crown of England.

William. Thanks, truthful Earl; I did not doubt thy word, But that my barons might believe thy word, And that the Holy Saints of Normandy When thou art home in England, with thine own, Might strengthen thee in keeping of thy word, I made thee swear.—Show him by whom he hath sworn.

[*The two Bishops advance, and raise the cloth of gold. The bodies and bones of Saints are seen lying in the ark.*

The holy bones of all the Canonized From all the holiest shrines in Normandy!

Harold. Horrible! [They let the cloth fall again.

William. Ay, for thou hast sworn an oath

Which, if not kept, would make the hard earth rive

To the very Devil's horns, the bright sky cleave

To the very feet of God, and send her hosts

Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of plague

Thro' all your cities, blast your infants, dash

The torch of war among your standing corn,

Dabble your hearths with your own blood.—Enough!

Thou wilt not break it! I, the Count—the King—

Thy friend—am grateful for thine honest oath,

Not coming fiercely like a conqueror, now,

But softly as a bridegroom to his own. For I shall rule according to your laws,

And make your ever-jarring Earldoms move

To music and in order—Angle, Jute, Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build a throne

Out-towering hers of France . . . The wind is fair

For England now . . . To-night we will be merry.
 To-morrow will I ride with thee to Harfleur.
 [Exeunt William and all the Norman barons, etc.
Harold. To-night we will be merry — and to-morrow —
 Juggler and bastard — bastard — he hates that most —
 William the tanner's bastard! Would he heard me!
 O God, that I were in some wide, waste field
 With nothing but my battle-axe and him
 To spatter his brains! Why let earth rive, gulf in
 These cursed Normans — yea and mine own self.
 Cleave heaven, and send thy saints that I may say
 Ev'n to their faces, "If ye side with William
 Ye are not noble." How their pointed fingers
 Glared at me! Am I Harold, Harold, son
 Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch mine arms,
 My limbs — they are not mine — they are a liar's —
 I mean to be a liar — I am not bound —
 Stigand shall give me absolution for it —
 Did the chest move? did it move?
 I am utter craven!
 O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou hast betray'd me!
Wulfnoth. Forgive me, brother, I will live here and die.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord! the Duke awaits thee at the banquet.
Harold. Where they eat dead men's flesh, and drink their blood.
Page. My lord —
Harold. I know your Norman cookery is so spiced, It masks all this.

Page. My lord! thou art white as death.
Harold. With looking on the dead, Am I so white?
 Thy Duke will seem the darker. Hence, I follow. [Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE KING'S PALACE. LONDON.

KING EDWARD *dying on a couch, and by him standing the QUEEN, HAROLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND, GURTH, LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, ALDWYTH, and EDITIL.*

Stigand. Sleeping or dying there? If this be death,
 Then our great Council wait to crown thee King —
 Come hither, I have a power; [To Harold.
 They call me near, for I am close to thee
 And England — I, old shrivell'd Stigand, I,
 Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead tree,
 I have a power!
 See here this little key about my neck! There lies a treasure buried down in Ely:
 If e'er the Norman grow too hard for thee,
 Ask me for this at thy most need, son Harold,
 At thy most need — not sooner.
Harold. So I will.
Stigand. Red gold — a hundred purses — yea, and more!
 If thou canst make a wholesome use of these
 To chink against the Norman, I do believe
 My old crook'd spine would bud out two young wings
 To fly to heaven straight with.
Harold. Thank thee, father! Thou art English, Edward too is English now,

He hath clean repented of his Normanism.

Stigand. Ay, as the libertine repents who cannot make done undone, when thro' his dying sense shrills "lost thro' thee." They have built their castles here; Our priories are Norman; the Norman adder hath bitten us; we are poison'd: our dear England Is demi-Norman. He!—

[*Pointing to King Edward, sleeping.*]

Harold. I would I were As holy and as passionless as he! That I might rest as calmly! Look at him— The rosy face, and long down-silvering beard, The brows unwrinkled as a summer mere.—

Stigand. A summer mere with sudden wretched gusts From a side-gorge. Passionless? How he flamed When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung him, nay, He fain had calcined all Northumbria To one black ash, but that thy patriot passion Siding with our great Council against Tostig, Outpassion'd his! Holy? ay, ay, forsooth, A conscience for his own soul, not his realm; A twilight conscience lighted thro' a chink; Thine by the sun; nay, by some sun to be, When all the world hath learnt to speak the truth, And lying were self-murder by that state Which was the exception.

Harold. That sun may God speed!

Stigand. Come, Harold shake the cloud off!

Harold. Can I, father? Our Tostig parted cursing me and England;

Our sister hates us for his banishment;

He hath gone to kindle Norway against England, And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy. For when I rode with William down to Harfleur,

"Wulfnoth is sick," he said; "he cannot follow;" Then with that friendly-friendly smile of his,

"We have learnt to love him, let him a little longer

Remain a hostage for the loyalty Of Godwin's house." As far as touches Wulfnoth

I that so prized plain word and naked truth

Have sinn'd against it—all in vain.

Leofwin. Good brother, By all the truths that ever priest hath preach'd,

Of all the lies that ever men have lied, Thine is the pardonablest.

Harold. May be so! I think it so, I think I am a fool To think it can be otherwise than so.

Stigand. Tut, tut, I have absolved thee: dost thou scorn me, Because I had my Canterbury pallium From one whom they dispossed?

Harold. No, Stigand, no!

Stigand. Is naked truth actable in true life?

I have heard a saying of thy father Godwin,

That, were a man of state nakedly true,

Men would but take him for the craftier liar.

Leofwin. Be men less delicate than the Devil himself?

I thought that naked Truth would shame the Devil

The Devil is so modest.

Gurth. He never said it!

Leofwin. Be thou not stupid-honest, brother Gurth!

Harold. Better to be a liar's dog, and hold

My master honest, than believe that lying

And ruling men are fatal twins that
cannot
Move one without the other. Edward wakes! —

Dazed — he hath seen a vision.

Edward. The green tree!
Then a great Angel past along the
highest

Crying "the doom of England," and
at once

He stood beside me, in his grasp a
sword
Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft
the tree

From off the bearing trunk, and
hurl'd it from him
Three fields away, and then he dash'd
and drench'd,

He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with
human blood,

And brought the sunder'd tree again,
and set it

Straight on the trunk, that thus baptiz'd
in blood

Grew ever high and higher, beyond
my seeing,

And shot out sidelong boughs across
the deep

That dropt themselves, and rooted in
far isles

Beyond my seeing: and the great
Angel rose

And past again along the highest cry-

"The doom of England!" — Tostig,
raise my head!

Falls back senseless.

Harold (raising him). Let Harold
serve for Tostig!

Queen. Harold served
Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tostig!

Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid
it low!

The sickness of our saintly king, for
whom

My prayers go up as fast as my tears
fall,

I well believe, hath mainly drawn it-
self

From lack of Tostig — thou hast ban-
ish'd him.

Harold. Nay — but the council, and
the king himself.

Queen. Thou hatest him, hatest
him.

Harold (coldly). Ay — Stigand,
unriddle

This vision, canst thou?

Stigand. Dotage!

Edward (starting up). It is finish'd.
I have built the Lord a house — the

Lord hath dwelt
In darkness. I have built the Lord a
house —

Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden
cherubim

With twenty-cubit wings from wall to
wall —

I have built the Lord a house — sing,
Asaph! clash

The cymbal, Heman! blow the trum-
pet, priest!

Fall, cloud, and fill the house — lo!
my two pillars,

Jachin and Boaz! —

[*Seeing Harold and Gurth.*
Harold, Gurth, — where am I?
Where is the charter of our Westmin-
ster?

Stigand. It lies beside thee, king,
upon thy bed.

Edward. Sign, sign at once — take,
sign it, Stigand, Aldred!

Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth,
and Leofwin,

Sign it, my queen!

All. We have sign'd it.

Edward. It is finish'd!
The kingliest Abbey in all Christian
lands,

The lordliest, loftiest minster ever
built

To Holy Peter in our English isle!
Let me be buried there, and all our
kings,

And all our just and wise and holy
men

That shall be born hereafter. It is
finish'd!

Hast thou had absolution for thine
oath? [To Harold.

Harold. Stigand hath given me
absolution for it.

He hath clean repented of his Normanism.

Stigand. Ay, as the libertine repents who cannot
Make done undone, when thro' his
dying sense
Shrills "lost thro' thee." They have
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Hath bitten us; we are poison'd: our
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Is demi-Norman. He!—

[*Pointing to King Edward, sleeping.*
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That I might rest as calmly! Look
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The brows unwrinkled as a summer
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From a side-gorge. Passionless? How
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Outpass'd his! Holy? ay, ay, forsooth,
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From off the bearing trunk, and
hurl’d it from him
Three fields away, and then he dash’d
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He dyed, he soak’d the trunk with
human blood,
And brought the smoulder’d tree again,
and set it
Straight on the trunk, that thus baptiz’d
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And past again along the highest cry-
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raise my head!

[Falls back senseless.]

Harold (raising him). Let Harold
serve for Tostig!

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Asaph! clash
The cymbal, Heman! blow the trum-
pet, priest!
Fall, cloud, and fill the house—lo!
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Jachin and Boaz!—
[Seeing Harold and Gurth.]
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lands,
The lordliest, loftiest minster ever
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To Holy Peter in our English isle!
Let me be buried there, and all our
kings,
And all our just and wise and holy
men
That shall be born hereafter. It is
finish’d!
Hast thou had absolution for thine
oath?
[To Harold.]
Harold. Stigand hath given me
absolution for it.

Edward. Stigand is not canonical enough
To save thee from the wrath of Norman Saints.

Stigand. Norman enough ! Be there no Saints of England
To help us from their brethren yonder ?

Edward. Prelate,
The Saints are one, but those of Normandy
Are mightier than our own. Ask it of Aldred.

Aldred. It shall be granted him, my king ; for he
Who vows a vow to strangle his own mother
Is guiltier keeping this, than breaking it.

Edward. O friends, I shall not overlive the day.

Stigand. Why then the throne is empty. Who inherits ?
For tho' we be not bound by the king's voice
In making of a king, yet the king's voice
Is much toward his making. Who inherits ?

Edgar the Atheling?

Edward. No, no, but Harold. I love him : he hath served me : none but he
Can rule all England. Yet the curse is on him
For swearing falsely by those blessed bones ;

He did not mean to keep his vow.

Harold. Not mean To make our England Norman.

Edward. There spake Godwin, Who hated all the Normans ; but their Saints

Have heard thee, Harold.

Edith. Oh ! my lord, my king ! He knew not whom he swore by.

Edward. Yea, I know He knew not, but those heavenly ears have heard, Their curse is on him ; wilt thou bring another,

Edith, upon his head !

Edith. No, no, not I.

Edward. Why then, thou must not wed him.

Harold. Wherefore, wherefore !

Edward. O son, when thou didst tell me of thine oath, I sorrow'd for my random promise given

To you fox-lion. I did not dream then

I should be king.— My son, the Saints are virgins ;

They love the white rose of virginity, The cold, white lily blowing in her cell :

I have been myself a virgin ; and I swear

To consecrate my virgin here to heaven —

The silent, cloister'd, solitary life, A life of life-long prayer against the curse

That lies on thee and England.

Harold. No, no, no.

Edward. Treble denial of the tongue of flesh, Like Peter's when he fell, and thou wilt have

To wail for it like Peter. O my son !

Are all oaths to be broken then, all promises

Made in our agony for help from heaven ?

Son, there is one who loves thee, and a wife,

What matters who, so she be serviceable

In all obedience, as mine own hath been :

God bless thee, wedded daughter.

[*Laying his hand on the Queen's head.*

Queen. Bless thou too That brother whom I love beyond the rest,

My banish'd Tostig.

Edward. All the sweet Saints bless him !

Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he comes !

And let him pass unscathed ; he loves me, Harold !

Be kindly to the Normans left among us,
Who follow'd me for love! and dear son, swear
When thou art king, to see my solemn vow
Accomplish'd.

Harold. Nay, dear lord, for I have sworn

Not to swear falsely twice.

Edward. Thou wilt not swear?

Harold. I cannot.

Edward. Then on thee remains the curse,

Harold, if thou embrace her; and on thee,

Edith, if thou abide it,—

[*The King swoons; Edith falls and kneels by the couch.*]

Stigand. He hath swoon'd! Death? . . . no, as yet a breath.

Harold. Look up! look up! Edith!

Aldred. Confuse her not; she hath begun

Her life-long prayer for thee.

Aldwryth. O noble Harold, I would thou couldst have sworn.

Harold. For thine own pleasure?

Aldwryth. No, but to please our dying king, and those

Who make thy good their own—all England, Earl.

Aldred. I would thou couldst have sworn. Our holy king

Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy Church

To save thee from the curse.

Harold. Alas! poor man, His promise brought it on me.

Aldred. O good son! That knowledge made him all the carefuller

To find a means whereby the curse might glance

From thee and England.

Harold. Father, we so loved—

Aldred. The more the love, the mightier is the prayer;

The more the love, the more acceptable

The sacrifice of both your loves to heaven.

No sacrifice to heaven, no help from heaven;
That runs thro' all the faiths of all the world.
And sacrifice there must be, for the king
Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and seen
A shadowing horror; there are signs in heaven—

Harold. Your comet came and went.

Aldred. And signs on earth!

Knowest thou Senlac hill?

Harold. I know all Sussex; A good entrenchment for a perilous hour!

Aldred. Pray God that come not suddenly! There is one Who passing by that hill three nights ago—

He shook so that he scarce could out with it—

Heard, heard—

Harold. The wind in his hair?

Aldred. A ghostly horn Blowing continually, and faint battle-hymns,

And cries, and clashes, and the groans of men;

And dreadful shadows strove upon the hill,

And dreadful lights crept up from out the marsh—

Corpse-candles gliding over nameless graves—

Harold. At Senlac?

Aldred. Senlac.

Edward (waking). Senlac! Sangue-lac,

The Lake of Blood!

Stigand. This lightning before death

Plays on the word,— and Normanizes too!

Harold. Hush, father, hush!

Edward. Thou uncanny fool, Wilt thou play with the thunder?

North and South Thunder together, showers of blood are blown

Before a never ending blast, and hiss

Against the blaze they cannot quench
— a lake,
A sea of blood — we are drown'd in
blood — for God
Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has
drawn the bow —
Sanguelae ! Sanguelae ! the arrow ! the
arrow ! [Dies.
Stigand. It is the arrow of death in
his own heart —
And our great Council wait to crown
thee King.

SCENE II. — IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE NEAR LONDON.

Edith. Crown'd, crown'd and lost,
crown'd King — and lost to me!
(Singing.)
Two young lovers in winter weather,
None to guide them,
Walk'd at night on the misty heather ;
Night, as black as a raven's feather ;
Both were lost and found together,
None beside them.
That is the burthen of it — lost and
found
Together in the cruel river Swale
A hundred years ago ; and there's
another,
Lost, lost, the light of day,
To which the lover answers lovingly

“ I am beside thee.”
Lost, lost, we have lost the way.
“ Love, I will guide thee.”
Whither, O whither ? into the river,
Where we two may be lost together,
And lost for ever ! “ Oh ! never, oh !
never,
Tho' we be lost and be found together.”

Some think they loved within the pale
forbidden
By Holy Church : but who shall say ?
the truth
Was lost in that fierce North, where
they were lost,

Where all good things are lost, where
Tostig lost
The good hearts of his people. It is
Harold !

(Enter HAROLD.)
Harold the King !
Harold. Call me not King,
but Harold.
Edith. Nay, thou art King !
Harold. Thine, thine, or King
or churl !
My girl, thou hast been weeping : turn
not thou
Thy face away, but rather let me be
King of the moment to thee, and com-
mand
That kiss my due when subject, which
will make
My kingship kinglier to me than to
reign
King of the world without it.
Edith. Ask me not,
Lest I should yield it, and the second
curse
Descend upon thine head, and thou
be only
King of the moment over England.
Harold. Edith,
Tho' somewhat less a king to my true
self
Than ere they crown'd me one, for I
have lost
Somewhat of upright stature thro'
mine oath,
Yet thee I would not lose, and sell
not thou
Our living passion for a dead man's
dream ;
Stigand believed he knew not what he
spake.
Oh God ! I cannot help it, but at
times
They seem to me too narrow, all the
faiths
Of this grown world of ours, whose
baby eye
Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise,
I fear
This curse, and scorn it. But a little
light ! —

And on it falls the shadow of the priest;
Heaven yield us more! for better,
Woden, all
Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim Walhalla,
Eternal war, than that the Saints at peace
The Holiest of our Holiest one should be
This William's fellow-tricksters; —
better die
Than credit this, for death is death,
or else
Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me — thou art not

A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear
There might be more than brother in my kiss,

And more than sister in thine own.

Edith. I dare not.
Harold. Scared by the church —

"Love for a whole life long"

When was that sung?

Edith. Here to the nightingales.

Harold. Their anthems of no church, how sweet they are!
Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king to cross

Their billings are they nest.

Edith. They are but of spring.
They fly the winter change — not so with us —

No wings to come and go.

Harold. But wing'd souls flying
Beyond all change and in the eternal distance

To settle on the Truth.

Edith. They are not so true,
They change their mates.

Harold. Do they? I did not know it.

Edith. They say thou art to wed the Lady Aldwyth.

Harold. They say, they say.

Edith. If this be politic,
And well for thee and England — and for her —

Care not for me who love thee.

Gurth (calling). Harold, Harold!

Harold. The voice of Gurth! (*Enter GURTH.*)

Good even, my good brother!

Gurth. Good even, gentle Edith.

Edith. Good even, Gurth.

Gurth. Ill news hath come! Our

hapless brother, Tostig —

He, and the giant King of Norway,

Harold

Hardrada — Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, Orkney,

Are landed North of Humber, and in a field

So packt with carnage that the dykes and brooks

Were bridged and damm'd with dead, have overthrown

Morcar and Edwin.

Harold. Well then, we must fight.

How blows the wind?

Gurth. Against St. Valery

And William.

Harold. Well then, we will to the North.

Gurth. Ay, but worse news: this William sent to Rome,

Swearing thou swarest falsely by his Saints:

The Pope and that Archdeacon Hildebrand

His master, heard him, and have sent him back

A holy gonfalon, and a blessed hair Of Peter, and all France, all Burgundy,

Poitou, all Christendom is raised against thee;

He hath cursed thee, and all those who fight for thee,

And given thy realm of England to the bastard.

Harold. Ha! ha!

Edith. Oh! laugh not! . . . Strange and ghastly in the gloom And shadowing of this double thunder-cloud

That lours on England — laughter!

Harold. No, not strange! This was old human laughter in old Rome

Before a Pope was born, when that which reign'd

Call'd itself God. — A kindly rendering

Of "Render unto Caesar." . . . The Good Shepherd !

Take this, and render that.

Gurth. They have taken York.

Harold. The Lord was God and came as man — the Pope

Is man and comes as God. — York taken ?

Gurth. Yea, Tostig hath taken York !

Harold. To York then. Edith, Hadst thou been braver, I had better braved

All — but I love thee and thou me — and that

Remains beyond all chances and all churches,

And that thou knowest.

Edith. Ay, but take back thy ring. It burns my hand — a curse to thee and me.

I dare not wear it.

[*Proffers Harold the ring, which he takes.*

Harold. But I dare. God with thee !

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*

Edith. The King hath cursed him, if he marry me ;

The Pope hath cursed him, marry me or no !

God help me ! I know nothing — can but pray

For Harold — pray, pray, pray — no help but prayer,

A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,

And touches Him that made it.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—IN NORTHUMBRIA.

ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, MORCAR, EDWIN, and Forces. Enter HAROLD. The standard of the golden Dragon of Wessex preceding him.

Harold. What ! are thy people sullen from defeat ?

Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the Humber,

No voice to greet it.

Edwin. Let not our great king

Believe us sullen — only shamed to the quick

Before the king — as having been so bruised

By Harold, king of Norway ; but our help

Is Harold, king of England. Pardon us, thou !

Our silence is our reverence for the king !

Harold. Earl of the Mercians ! if the truth be gall,

Cram me not thou with honey, when our good hive

Needs every sting to save it.

Voices. Aldwyth ! Aldwyth !

Harold. Why cry thy people on thy sister's name ?

Morcar. She hath won upon our people thro' her beauty, and pleasantness among them.

Voices. Aldwyth, Aldwyth !

Harold. They shout as they would have her for a queen.

Morcar. She hath followed with our host, and suffer'd all.

Harold. What would ye, men ?

Voice. Our old Northumbrian crown,

And kings of our own choosing.

Harold. Your old crown Were little help without our Saxon earle

Against Hardrada.

Voice. Little ! we are Danes, Who conquer'd what we walk on, our own field.

Harold. They have been plotting here ! [Aside.

Voice. He calls us little !

Harold. The kingdoms of this world began with little,

A hill, a fort, a city — that reach'd a hand

Down to the field beneath it, "Be thou mine,"

Then to the next, "Thou also !" If the field

Cried out "I am mine own ;" another hill

Or fort, or city, took it, and the first Fell, and the next became an Empire.

Voice. Yet
Thou art but a West Saxon: we are
Danes!

Harold. My mother is a Dane, and
I am English;
There is a pleasant fable in old books,
Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a
score
All in one faggot, snap it over knee,
Ye cannot.

Voice. Hear King Harold! he
says true!

Harold. Would ye be Norsemen?

Voice. No!

Harold. Or Norman?

Voice. No!

Harold. Snap not the faggot-band
then.

Voice. That is true!

Voice. Ah, but thou art not kingly,
only grandson

To Wulfnoth, a poor cow-herd.

Harold. This old Wulfnoth
Would take me on his knees and tell
me tales

Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great
Who drove you Danes; and yet he
held that Dane,

Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should
be all

One England, for this cow-herd, like
my father,

Who shook the Norman scoundrels
off the throne,

Had in him kingly thoughts — a king
of men,

Not made but born, like the great
king of all,

A light among the oxen.

Voice. That is true!

Voice. Ah, and I love him now, for
mine own father

Was great, and cobbler.

Voice. Thou art Tostig's brother,
Who wastes the land.

Harold. This brother comes to save
Your land from waste; I saved it
once before,

For when your people banish'd Tostig
hence,

Ard Edward would have sent a host
against you,

Then I, who loved my brother, bade
the king
Who doted on him, sanction your de-
cree
Of Tostig's banishment, and choice
of Morcar,
To help the realm from scattering.

Voice. King! thy brother,
If one may dare to speak the truth,
was wrong'd.

Wild was he, born so: but the plots
against him
Had madden'd tamer men.

Morcar. Thou art one of those
Who brake into Lord Tostig's trea-
sure-house

And slew two hundred of his following,
And now, when Tostig hath come back
with power,

Are frightened back to Tostig.

Old Thane. Ugh! Plots and feuds!
This is my ninetieth birthday. Can
ye not

Be brethren? Godwin still at feud
with Alfgar,
And Alfgar hates King Harold. Plots
and feuds!

This is my ninetieth birthday!

Harold. Old man, Harold
Hates nothing; not his fault, if our
two houses

Be less than brothers.

Voice. Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth!

Harold. Agnus! Morcar! Edwin!
What do they mean?

Edwin. So the good king would
deign to lend an ear
Not overcornful, we might chance —
perchance —

To guess their meaning.

Morcar. Thine own meaning, Har-
old,

To make all England one, to close all
feuds,

Mixing our bloods, that thence a king
may rise

Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to
rule

All England beyond question, beyond
quarrel.

Harold. Who sow'd this fancy here
among the people?

Morcar. Who knows what sows
itself among the people?
A goodly flower at times.

Harold. The Queen of Wales?
Why, Morear, it is all but duty in
her
To hate me; I have heard she hates
me.

Morcar. No!
For I can swear to that, but cannot
swear
That these will follow thee against
the Norsemen,
If thou deny them this.

Harold. Morear and Edwin,
When will ye cease to plot against
my house?

Edwin. The king can scarcely
dream that we, who know
His prowess in the mountains of the
West,
Should care to plot against him in
the North.

Morcar. Who dares arraign us,
king, of such a plot?

Harold. Ye heard one witness even
now.

Morcar. The craven!
There is a faction risen again for
Tostig,
Since Tostig came with Norway—
fright not love.

Harold. Morear and Edwin, will ye,
if I yield,
Follow against the Norseman?

Morcar. Surely, surely!
Harold. Morear and Edwin, will ye
upon oath,

Help us against the Norman?

Morcar. With good will;
Yea, take the Sacrament upon it, king.

Harold. Where is thy sister?

Morcar. Somewhere hard at hand.
Call and she comes.

[One goes out, then enter Aldwyth.]

Harold. I doubt not but thou knowest
Why thou art summon'd.

Aldwyth. Why? — I stay with these,
Lest thy fierce Tostig spy me out
alone,

And slay me all alive.

Harold. Canst thou love one

Who did discrown thine husband, un-
queen thee?

Didst thou not love thine husband?
Aldwyth. Oh! my lord,
The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage
king—

That was, my lord, a match of policy.
Harold. Was it?

I knew him brave: he loved his land:
he fain

Had made her great: his finger on her
harp
(I heard him more than once) had in
it Wales,

Her floods, her woods, her hills: had
I been his,

I had been all Welsh.

Aldwyth. Oh, ay—all Welsh—
and yet

I saw thee drive him up his hills—
and women

Cling to the conquer'd, if they love,
the more;

If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.
We never—oh! good Morear, speak
for us,

His conqueror conquer'd Aldwyth.

Harold. Goodly news!

Morcar. Doubt it not thou! Since
Griffyth's head was sent
To Edward, she hath said it.

Harold. I had rather
She would have loved her husband.

Aldwyth. Aldwyth,
Canst thou love me, thou knowing
where I love?

Aldwyth. I can, my lord, for mine
own sake, for thine,
For England, for thy poor white dove,
who flutters

Between thee and the porch, but then
would find

Her nest within the cloister, and be
still.

Harold. Canst thou love one, who
cannot love again?

Aldwyth. Full hope have I that love
will answer love.

Harold. Then in the name of the
great God, so be it!

Come, Aldred, join our hands before
the hosts,

That all may see.

[Aldred joins the hands of Harold
and Aldwyth and blesses them.]

Voices. Harold, Harold and Ald-
wyth!

Harold. Set forth our golden Dra-
gon, let him flap
The wings that beat down Wales!
Advance our Standard of the Warrior,
Dark among gems and gold; and
thou, brave banner,
Blaze like a night of fatal stars on
those

Who read their doom and die.
Where lie the Norsemen? on the
Derwent? ay

At Stamford-bridge.

Morecar, collect thy men; Edwin, my
friend —

Thou lingerest. — Gurth, —
Last night King Edward came to me
in dreams —
The rosy face and long down-silvering
beard —

He told me I should conquer: —
I am no woman to put faith in dreams.

(To his army.)

Last night King Edward came to me
in dreams,

And told me we should conquer.

Voices. Forward! Forward!
Harold and Holy Cross!

Aldwyth. The day is won!

SCENE II.—A PLAIN. BEFORE THE
BATTLE OF STAMFORD-BRIDGE.

HAROLD and his Guard.

Harold. Who is it comes this way?

Tostig. (Enter TOSTIG with a
small force.) O brother,

What art thou doing here?

Tostig. I am foraging
For Norway's army.

Harold. I could take and slay thee.
Thou art in arms against us.

Tostig. Take and slay me,
For Edward loved me.

Harold. Edward bade me spare
thee.

Tostig. I hate King Edward, for he
join'd with thee

To drive me outlaw'd. Take and slay
me, I say,
Or I shall count thee fool.

Harold. Take thee, or free thee,
Free thee or slay thee, Norway will
have war;

No man would strike with Tostig, save
for Norway.

Thou art nothing in thine England,
save for Norway,

Who loves not thee but war. What
dost thou here,
Trampling thy mother's bosom into
blood?

Tostig. She hath wean'd me from
it with such bitterness.

I come for mine own Earldom, my
Northumbria;

Thou hast given it to the enemy of
our house.

Harold. Northumbria threw thee
off, she will not have thee,
Thou hast misused her: and, O crown-
ing crime!

Hast murder'd thine own guest, the
son of Orm,
Gamel, at thine own hearth.

Tostig. The slow, fat fool!
He drawl'd and prated so, I smote
him suddenly,
I knew not what I did. He held with
Morecar, —

I hate myself for all things that I
do.

Harold. And Morecar holds with
us. Come back with him,
Know what thou dost; and we may
find for thee,
So thou be chasten'd by thy banish-
ment,
Some easier earldom.

Tostig. What for Norway then?
He looks for land among us, he and
his.

Harold. Seven feet of English land,
or something more,
Seeing he is a giant.

Tostig. That is noble!
That sounds of Godwin.

Harold. Come thou back, and
be
Once more a son of Godwin.

Tostig (turns away). O brother,
brother,

O Harold —

Harold (laying his hand on Tostig's shoulder). Nay then, come thou
back to us!

Tostig (after a pause turning to him). Never shall any man say that I,
that Tostig

Conjured the mightier Harold from
his North
To do the battle for me here in Eng-
land,
Then left him for the meaner! thee! —

Thou hast no passion for the House
of Godwin —

Thou hast but cared to make thyself
a king —

Thou hast sold me for a cry. —
Thou gavest thy voice against me in
the Council —

I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy
thee.

Farewell for ever! [Exit.]

Harold. On to Stamford-bridge!

SCENE III.

AFTER THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD-
BRIDGE. BANQUET.

HAROLD and ALDWYTH. GURTH,
LEOFWIN, MORCAR, EDWIN, and
other Earls and Thanes.

Voice. Hail! Harold! Aldwyth!
hail, bridegroom and bride!

Aldwyth (talking with Harold). Answer them thou!

Is this our marriage-banquet? Would
the wines
Of wedding had been dash'd into the
cups
Of victory, and our marriage and thy
glory
Been drunk together! these poor
hands but sew,
Spin, broder — would that they were
man's to have held
The battle-axe by thee!

Harold. There was a moment
When being forced aloof from all my
guard,

And striking at Hardrada and his
madmen

I had wish'd for any weapon.

Aldwyth. Why art thou sad?

Harold. I have lost the boy who
play'd at ball with me,
With whom I fought another fight
than this

Of Stamford-bridge.

Aldwyth. Ay! ay! thy victories
Over our own poor Wales, when at
thy side

He conquer'd with thee.

Harold. No — the childish fist
That cannot strike again.

Aldwyth. Thou art too kindly.
Why didst thou let so many Norse-
men hence?

Thy fierce forekings had clenched
their pirate hides
To the bleak church doors, like kites
upon a barn.

Harold. Is there so great a need to
tell thee why?

Aldwyth. Yea, am I not thy wife?

Voices. Hail, Harold, Aldwyth!
Bridegroom and bride!

Aldwyth. Answer them!

[To Harold.

Harold (to all). Earls and Thanes!
Full thanks for your fair greeting of
my bride!

Earls, Thanes, and all our country-
men! the day,

Our day beside the Derwent will not
shine

Less than a star among the goldenest
hours

Of Alfred, or of Edward his great
son,

Or Athelstan, or English Ironside
Who fought with Knut, or Knut who
coming Dane

Died English. Every man about his
king

Fought like a king; the king like his
own man,

No better; one for all, and all for
one,

One soul ! and therefore have we shatter'd back
 The hugest wave from Norseland ever yet
 Surged on us, and our battle-axes broken
 The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his carrion croak
 From the gray sea for ever. Many are gone —
 Drink to the dead who died for us, the living
 Who fought and would have died, but happier lived,
 If happier be to live ; they both have life
 In the large mouth of England, till her voice
 Die with the world. Hail — hail !

Morcar. May all invaders perish like Hardrada !

All traitors fail like Tostig !

[All drink but Harold.]

Aldwyth. Thy cup's full !

Harold. I saw the hand of Tostig cover it.
 Our dear, dead, traitor-brother, Tostig, him
 Reverently we buried. Friends, had I been here,
 Without too large self-lauding I must hold
 The sequel had been other than his league
 With Norway, and this battle. Peace be with him !
 He was not of the worst. If there be those
 At banquet in this hall, and hearing me —
 For there be those I fear who prick'd the lion
 To make him spring, that sight of Danish blood
 Might serve an end not English — peace with them
 Likewise, if they can be at peace with what
 God gave us to divide us from the wolf !

Aldwyth (aside to Harold). Make not our Morear sullen : it is not wise.

Harold. Hail to the living who fought, the dead who fell !

Voices. Hail, hail !

First Thane. How ran that answer which King Harold gave To his dead namesake, when he ask'd for England ?

Leofwin. " Seven feet of English earth, or something more, Seeing he is a giant ! "

First Thane. Then for the bastard Six feet and nothing more !

Leofwin. Ay, but belike Thou hast not learnt his measure.

First Thane. By St. Edmund I over-measure him. Sound sleep to the man

Here by dead Norway without dream or dawn !

Second Thane. What is he bragging still that he will come To thrust our Harold's throne from under him ?

My nurse would tell me of a molehill crying To a mountain " Stand aside and room for me ! "

First Thane. Let him come ! let him come. Here's to him, sink or swim ! [Drinks.]

Second Thane. God sink him !

First Thane. Cannot hands which had the strength

To shove that stranded iceberg off our shores,

And send the shatter'd North again to sea,

Scuttle his cockle-shell ? What's Brunanburg

To Stamford-bridge ? a war-crash, and so hard,

So loud, that, by St. Dunstan, old St. Thor —

By God, we thought him dead — but our old Thor

Heard his own thunder again, and woke and came

Among us again, and mark'd the sons of those

Who made this Britain England, break the North :

Mark'd how the war-axe swang,
Heard how the war-horn sang,
Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,
Heard how the shield-wall rang,
Iron on iron clang,
Anvil on hammer bang —

Second Thane. Hammer on anvil,
hammer on anvil. Old dog,
Thou art drunk, old dog!

First Thane. Too drunk to fight
with thee!

Second Thane. Fight thou with
thine own double, not with me,
Keep that for Norman William!

First Thane. Down with William!

Third Thane. The washerwoman's
brat!

Fourth Thane. The tanner's bas-
tard!

Fifth Thane. The Falaise byblow!

[Enter a Thane from Pevensey,
spatter'd with mud.]

Harold. Ay, but what late guest,
As haggard as a fast of forty days,
And caked and plaster'd with a hun-
dred mires,
Hath stumbled on our cups?

Thane from Pevensey. My lord the
King!
William the Norman, for the wind had
changed —

Harold. I felt it in the middle of
that fierce fight
At Stamford-bridge. William hath
landed, ha?

Thane from Pevensey. Landed at
Pevensey — I am from Peven-
sey —

Hath wasted all the land at Peven-
sey —

Hath harried mine own cattle — God
confound him!

I have ridden night and day from
Pevensey —

A thousand ships — a hundred thou-
sand men —

Thousands of horses, like as many
lions

Neighing and roaring as they leapt to
land —

Harold. How oft in coming hast
thou broken bread?

Thane from Pevensey. Some thrice,
or so.

Harold. Bring not thy hollowness
On our full feast. Famine is fear,
were it but
Of being starved. Sit down, sit down,
and eat,
And, when again red-blooded, speak
again;

(Aside.) The men that guarded
England to the South

Were scatter'd to the harvest....
No power mine

To hold their force together....
Many are fallen

At Stamford-bridge . . . the people
stupid-sure

Sleep like their swine . . . in South
and North at once

I could not be.

(Aloud.) Gurth, Leofwin, Morcar,
Edwin!

(Pointing to the revellers.) The curse
of England! these are drown'd
in wassail,

And cannot see the world but thro'
their wines!

Leave them! and thee too, Aldwyth,
must I leave —

Harsh is the news! hard is our honey-
moon!

Thy pardon. (Turning round to his
attendants.) Break the banquet
up . . . Ye four!

And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black
news,

Cram thy crop full, but come when
thou art call'd. [Exit Harold.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A TENT ON A MOUND,
FROM WHICH CAN BE SEEN THE
FIELD OF SENLAC.

HAROLD, sitting; by him standing HUGH
MARGOT the Monk, GURTH, LEOF-
WIN.

Harold. Refer my cause, my crown
to Rome! . . . The wolf

Muddled the brook and predetermined all.

Monk,

Thou hast said thy say, and had my constant "No"
For all but instant battle. I hear no more.

Margot. Hear me again — for the last time. Arise,
Scatter thy people home, descend the hill,
Lay hands of full allegiance in thy Lord's

And crave his mercy, for the Holy Father

Hath given this realm of England to the Norman.

Harold. Then for the last time, monk, I ask again
When had the Lateran and the Holy Father

To do with England's choice of her own king?

Margot. Earl, the first Christian Caesar drew to the East
To leave the Pope dominion in the West.

He gave him all the kingdoms of the West.

Harold. So! — did he? — Earl — I have a mind to play
The William with thine eyesight and thy tongue.

Earl — ay — thou art but but a messenger of William.

I am weary — go: make me not wroth with thee!

Margot. Mock-king, I am the messenger of God,
His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene, Tekel!

Is thy wrath Hell, that I should spare to cry,
Yon heaven is wroth with thee? Hear me again!

Our Saints have moved the Church that moves the world,
And all the Heavens and very God: they heard —

They know King Edward's promise and thine — thine.

Harold. Should they not know free England crowns herself?

Not know that he nor I had power to promise?

Not know that Edward cancell'd his own promise?

And for my part therein — Back to that juggler, [Rising.
Tell him the Saints are nobler than he dreams,

Tell him that God is nobler than the Saints,

And tell him we stand arm'd on Senlac Hill,

And bide the doom of God.

Margot. Hear it thro' me. The realm for which thou art forsown is cursed,

The babe enwomb'd and at the breast is cursed,

The corpse thou whelmest with thine earth is cursed,

The soul who fighteth on thy side is cursed,

The seed thou sowest in thy field is cursed,

The steer wherewith thou plowest thy field is cursed,

The fowl that feleth o'er thy field is cursed,

And thou, usurper, liar —

Harold. Out, beast monk! [Lifting his hand to strike him.
Gurth stops the blow.

I ever hated monks.

Margot. I am but a voice Among you: murder, martyr me if ye will —

Harold. Thanks, Gurth! The simple, silent, selfless man Is worth a world of tonguesters. (To Margot.) Get thee gone! He means the thing he says. See him out safe!

Leofwin. He hath blown himself as red as fire with curses.

An honest fool! Follow me, honest fool, But if thou blurt thy curse among our folk,

I know not — I may give that egg-bald head

The tap that silences.

Harold. See him out safe.
[*Exeunt Leofwin and Margot.*

Gurth. Thou hast lost thine even temper, brother Harold!

Harold. Gurth, when I past by Waltham, my foundation

For men who serve the neighbor, not themselves,

I cast me down prone, praying; and, when I rose,

They told me that the Holy Rood had lean'd

And bow'd above me; whether that which held it

Had weaken'd, and the Rood itself were bound

To that necessity which binds us down; Whether it bow'd at all but in their fancy;

Or if it bow'd, whether it symbol'd ruin

Or glory, who shall tell? but they were sad,

And somewhat sadden'd me.

Gurth. Yet if a fear, Or shadow of a fear, lest the strange Saints

By whom thou swarest, should have power to balk

Thy puissance in this fight with him, who made

And heard thee swear — brother — I have not sworn —

If the king fall, may not the kingdom fall?

But if I fall, I fall, and thou art king;

And, if I win, I win, and thou art king; Draw thou to London, there make strength to breast

Whatever chance, but leave this day to me.

Leofwin (entering). And waste the land about thee as thou goest, And be thy hand as winter on the field, To leave the foe no forage.

Harold. Noble Gurth! Best son of Godwin! If I fall, I fall — The doom of God! How should the people fight

When the king flies? And, Leofwin, art thou mad?

How should the King of England waste the fields

Of England, his own people? — No glance yet
Of the Northumbrian helmet on the heath?

Leofwin. No, but a shoal of wives upon the heath,
And someone saw thy willy-nilly run Vying a tress against our golden fern.

Harold. Vying a tear with our cold dews, a sigh With these low-moaning heavens. Let her be fetch'd. We have parted from our wife without reproach, Tho' we have dived thro' all her practices; And that is well.

Leofwin. I saw her even now: She hath not left us.

Harold. Nought of Morcar then?

Gurth. Nor seen, nor heard; thine, William's or his own As wind blows, or tide flows: belike he watches,

If this war-storm in one of its rough rolls

Wash up that old crown of Northumberland.

Harold. I had married her for Morcar — a sin against The truth of love. Evil for good, it seems,

Is oft as childless of the good as evil For evil.

Leofwin. Good for good hath borne at times

A bastard false as William.

Harold. Ay, if Wisdom Pair'd not with Good. But I am somewhat worn, A snatch of sleep were like the peace of God.

Gurth, Leofwin, go once more about the hill —

What did the dead man call it — Sanguelac,

The lake of blood?

Leofwin. A lake that dips in William

As well as Harold.

Harold. Like enough. I have seen

The trenches dug, the palisades up-reard
And wattled thick with ash and willow-wands;
Yea, wrought at them myself. Go round once more;
See all be sound and whole. No Norman horse
Can shatter England, standing shield by shield;
Tell that again to all.

Gurth. I will, good brother.
Harold. Our guardsman hath but toil'd his hand and foot,
I hand, foot, heart and head. Some wine! (*One pours wine into a goblet which he hands to Harold.*)

Too much!

What? we must use our battle-axe to-day.

Our guardsmen have slept well, since we came in?

Leofwin. Ay, slept and snored.
Your second-sighted man
That scared the dying conscience of the king,
Misheard their snores for groans.
They are up again
And chanting that old song of Brunanburg

Where England conquer'd.

Harold. That is well. The Norman, What is he doing?

Leofwin. Praying for Normandy; Our scouts have heard the tinkle of their bells.

Harold. And our old songs are prayers for England too!
But by all Saints—

Leofwin. Barring the Norman!
Harold. Nay, Were the great trumpet blowing doomsday dawn,
I needs must rest. Call when the Norman moves—

[*Exeunt all but Harold.*
No horse—thousand of horses—our shield wall—

Wall—break it not—break not—break—

[*Sleeps.*
Vision of Edward. Son Harold, I thy king, who came before

To tell thee thou shouldst win at Stamford-bridge,
Come yet once more, from where I am at peace,
Because I loved thee in my mortal day,
To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac hill—

Sanguelac!
Vision of Wulfnoth. O brother, from my ghastlyoubliette I send my voice across the narrow seas—
No more, no more, dear brother, nevermore—

Sanguelac!
Vision of Tostig. O brother, most unbrotherlike to me, Thou gavest thy voice against me in my life, I give my voice against thee from the grave—

Sanguelac!
Vision of Norman Saints. O hapless Harold! King but for an hour! Thou swarest falsely by our blessed bones, We give our voice against thee out of heaven!

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! The arrow! the arrow!

Harold (*starting up, battle-axe in hand.*) Away! My battle-axe against your voices. Peace!

The king's last word—"the arrow!" I shall die—

I die for England then, who lived for England—

What nobler? men must die. I cannot fall into a falser world—I have done no man wrong. Tostig, poor brother, Art thou so anger'd?

Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy hands Save for thy wild and violent will that wrench'd All hearts of freemen from thee. I could do No other than this way advise the king

Against the race of Godwin. Is it possible
That mortal men should bear their earthly heats
Into yon bloodless world, and threaten us thence
Unschool'd of Death? Thus then thou art revenged —
I left our England naked to the South
To meet thee in the North. The Norseman's raid
Hath help't the Norman, and the race of Godwin
Hath ruin'd Godwin. No — our wak'ing thoughts
Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the pools
Of sullen slumber, and arise again
Disjointed: only dreams — where mine own self
Takes part against myself! Why? for a spark
Of self-disdain born in me when I sware
Falsely to him, the falser Norman, over
His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by whom
I knew not that I sware, — not for myself —
For England — yet not wholly —

(Enter EDITH.)

Edith, Edith,
Get thou into thy cloister as the king
Will'd it: be safe: the perjury-mon-
gering Count
Hath made too good an use of Holy Church
To break her close! There the great God of truth
Fill all thine hours with peace! — A lying devil
Hath haunted me — mine oath — my wife — I fain
Had made my marriage not a lie; I could not:
Thou art my bride! and thou in after years
Praying perchance for this poor soul of mine

In cold, white cells beneath an icy moon —
This memory to thee! — and this to England,
My legacy of war against the Pope
From child to child, from Pope to Pope, from age to age,
Till the sea wash her level with her shores,
Or till the Pope be Christ's.

Enter ALDWYTH.

Aldwyth (*to Edith*). Away from him!

Edith. I will . . . I have not spoken to the king

One word; and one I must. Farewell!
[Going.
Harold. Not yet.

Stay.

Edith. To what use?

Harold. The king commands thee, woman!

(*To Aldwyth*.)

Have thy two brethren sent their forces in?

Aldwyth. Nay, I fear not.

Harold. Then there's no force in thee!

Thou didst possess thyself of Edward's ear

To part me from the woman that I loved!

Thou didst arouse the fierce Northumbrians!

Thou hast been false to England and to me! —

As . . . in some sort . . . I have been false to thee.

Leave me. No more — Pardon on both sides — go!

Aldwyth. Alas, my lord, I loved thee!

Harold (*bitterly*). With a love passing thy love for Griffyth! wherefore now

Obey my first and last commandment. Go!

Aldwyth. O Harold! husband! Shall we meet again?

Harold. After the battle — after the battle. Go.

Aldwyth. I go. (*Aside.*) That I could stab her standing there!

[*Exit Aldwyth.*

Edith. Alas, my lord, she loved thee.
Harold. Never! never!

Edith. I saw it in her eyes!

Harold. I see it in thine.
And not on thee—nor England—fall
God's doom!

Edith. On thee? on me? And thou art England! Alfred Was England. Ethelred was nothing.

England

Is but her king, and thou art Harold!

Harold. Edith,

The sign in heaven—the sudden blast at sea—

My fatal oath—the dead Saints—the dark dreams—

The Pope's Anathema—the Holy Rood

That bow'd to me at Waltham—Edith, if

I, the last English king of England—

Edith. No,
First of a line that coming from the people,

And chosen by the people—

Harold. And fighting for And dying for the people—

Edith. Living! living!

Harold. Yea so, good cheer! thou art Harold, I am Edith!

Look not thus wan!

Edith. What matters how I look? Have we not broken Wales and Norse-

land? slain,

Whose life was all one battle, incarnate war,

Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-arms

Than William.

Harold. Ay, my girl, no tricks in him—

No bastard he! when all was lost, he yell'd,

And bit his shield, and dash'd it on the ground,

And swaying his two-handed sword about him,

Two deaths at every swing, ran in upon us

And died so, and I loved him as I hate This liar who made me liar. If Hate can kill,

And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-axe—

Edith. Waste not thy might before the battle!

Harold. No,
And thou must hence. Stigand will see thee safe,
And so—Farewell.

[*He is going, but turns back.*
The ring thou darest not wear,
I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet my hand.

[*HAROLD shows the ring which is on his finger.*
Farewell!

[*He is going, but turns back again.*
I am as dead as Death this day to ought of earth's

Save William's death or mine.

Edith. Thy death!—to-day!
Is it not thy birthday?

Harold. Ay, that happy day!
A birthday welcome! happy days and many!

One—this! [*They embrace.*
Look, I will bear thy blessing into the battle

And front the doom of God.

Norman cries (heard in the distance).
Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Enter GURTH.
Gurth. The Norman moves!

Harold. Harold and Holy Cross!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*

Enter STIGAND.
Stigand. Our Church in arms—the lamb the lion—not Spear into pruning-hook—the counter way—

Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe.

Abbot Alfwig,
Leofric, and all the monks of Peterboro'

Strike for the king; but I, old wretch, old Stigand,

With hands too limp to brandish iron—and yet

I have a power—would Harold ask
me for it—

I have a power.

Edith. What power, holy father?

Stigand. Power now from Harold
to command thee hence
And see thee safe from Senlac.

Edith. I remain!

Stigand. Yea, so will I, daughter,
until I find
Which way the battle balance. I can
see it
From where we stand: and, live or
die, I would
I were among them!

Canons from Waltham (*singing without*).

Salva patriam
Sancte Pater,
Salva Fili,
Salva Spiritus,
Salva patriam,
Sancta Mater.¹

Edith. Are those the blessed angels
quiring, father?

Stigand. No, daughter, but the
canons out of Waltham,
The king's foundation, that have fol-
low'd him.

Edith. O God of battles, make their
wall of shields
Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their
palisades!

What is that whirring sound?

Stigand. The Norman arrow!

Edith. Look out upon the battle—
is he safe?

Stigand. The king of England
stands between his banners.
He glitters on the crowning of the hill.
God save King Harold!

Edith. —chosen by his people
And fighting for his people!

Stigand. There is one
Come as Goliath came of yore—he
flings
His brand in air and catches it again,
He is chanting some old war-song.

Edith. And no David

¹ The *a* throughout these Latin hymns
should be sounded broad, as in "father."

To meet him?

Stigand. Ay, there springs a Saxon
on him,

Falls— and another falls.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Lo! our good Gurth hath
smitten him to the death.

Edith. So perish all the enemies of
Harold!

Canons (singing).

Hostis in Angliam
Ruit praedator,
Illorum, Domine,
Scutum scindatur!
Hostis per Angliae
Plagas bacchatur;
Casa crematur
Pastor fugatur
Grex trucidatur—

Stigand. Illos trucida, Domine.

Edith. Ay, good father.

Canons (singing).

Illorum sclera
Pœna sequatur!

English cries. Harold and Holy
Cross! Out! out!

Stigand. Our javelins
Answer their arrows. All the Nor-
man foot
Are storming up the hill. The range
of knights
Sit, each a statue on his horse, and
wait.

English cries. Harold and God Al-
mighty!

Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!
Canons (singing).

Eques cum pedite
Præpediatur!
Illorum in lacrymas
Cruor fundatur!
Pereant, pereant,
Anglia precatur.

Stigand. Look, daughter, look.

Edith. Nay, father, look for me!

Stigand. Our axes lighten with a sin-
gle flash

About the summit of the hill, and heads
And arms are sliver'd off and splin-
ter'd by

Their lightning — and they fly — the Norman flies.

Edith. Stigand, O father, have we won the day?

Stigand. No, daughter, no — they fall behind the horse —

Their horse are thronging to the barricades;

I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter Floating above their helmets — ha! he is down!

Edith. He down! Who down?

Stigand. The Norman Count is down.

Edith. So perish all the enemies of England!

Stigand. No, no, he hath risen again — he bares his face — Shouts something — he points onward — all their horse Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming up.

Edith. O God of battles, make his battle-axe keen As thine own sharp-dividing justice, heavy As thine own bolts that fall on crimeful heads Charged with the weight of heaven wherefrom they fall!

Canons (singing).

Jacta tonitrua
Deus bellator!
Surgas e tenebris,
Sis vindicator!
Fulmina, fulmina,
Deus vastator!

Edith. O God of battles, they are three to one, Make thou one man as three to roll them down!

Canons (singing).

Equus cum equite
Dejiciatur!
Acies, Acies
Prona sternatur!
Ilorum lances
Frangere Creator!

Stigand. Yea, yea, for how their lances snap and shiver

Against the shifting blaze of Harold's axe!

War-woodman of old Woden, how he falls

The mortal copse of faces! There! And there!

The horse and horseman cannot meet the shield,

The blow that brains the horseman cleaves the horse,

The horse and horseman roll along the hill,

They fly once more, they fly, the Norman flies!

Equus cum equite
Præcipitatur.

Edith. O God, the God of truth hath heard my cry.

Follow them, follow them, drive them to the sea!

Ilorum scelera
Poena sequatur!

Stigand. Truth! no; a lie; a trick, a Norman trick!

They turnon the pursuer, horse against foot,

They murder all that follow.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Hot-headedfools—to burst the wall of shields!

They have broken the commandment of the king!

Edith. His oath was broken — O holy Norman Saints, Ye that now are of heaven, and see beyond

Your Norman shrines, pardon it, pardon it,

That he forsware himself for all he loved,

Me, me and all! Look out upon the battie!

Stigand. They thunder again upon the barricades.

My sight is eagle, but the strife so thick —

This is the hottest of it: hold, ash! hold, willow!

English cries. Out, out!

Norman cries. Ha Rou!

Stigand. Ha! Gurth hath leapt upon him
And slain him : he hath fallen.

Edith. And I am heard.
Glory to God in the Highest! fallen, fallen!

Stigand. No, no, his horse — he mounts another — yields His war-club, dashes it on Gurth, and Gurth,

Our noble Gurth, is down!

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. And Leofwin is down!

Edith. Have mercy on us!
O Thou that knowest, let not my strong prayer

Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I love.

The husband of another!

Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Edith. I do not hear our English war-cry.

Stigand. No.

Edith. Look out upon the battle — is he safe?

Stigand. He stands between the banners with the dead So piled about him he can hardly move.

Edith (takes up the war-cry). Out! out!

Norman cries. Ha Rou!

Edith (cries out). Harold and Holy Cross!

Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Edith. What is that whirring sound?

Stigand. The Norman sends his arrows up to Heaven, They fall on those within the palisade!

Edith. Look out upon the hill — is Harold there?

Stigand. Sanguelac — Sanguelac — the arrow — the arrow! — away!

SCENE II. — FIELD OF THE DEAD. NIGHT.

ALDWYTH and EDITH.

Aldwyth. O Edith, art thou here? O Harold, Harold — Our Harold — we shall never see him more.

Edith. For there was more than sister in my kiss, And so the saints were wroth. I cannot love them, For they are Norman saints — and yet I should —

They are so much holier than their harlot's son With whom they play'd their game against the king!

Aldwyth. The king is slain, the kingdom overthrown!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. How no matter, Harold slain?

I cannot find his body. O help me thou!

O Edith, if I ever wrought against thee,

Forgive me thou, and help me here!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. Not help me, nor forgive me?

Edith. So thou saidest.

Aldwyth. I say it now, forgive me!

Edith. Cross me not! I am seeking one who wedded me in secret.

Whisper! God's angels only know it. Ha!

What art thou doing here among the dead?

They are stripping the dead bodies naked yonder,

And thou art come to rob them of their rings!

Aldwyth. O Edith, Edith, I have lost both crown

And husband.

Edith. So have I.

Aldwyth. I tell thee, girl, I am seeking my dead Harold.

Edith. And I mine! The Holy Father strangled him with a hair

Of Peter, and his brother Tostig helpt; The wicked sister clapt her hands and laugh'd;

Then all the dead fell on him.

Aldwyth. Edith, Edith —

Edith. What was he like, this husband? like to thee?

Call not for help from me. I knew him not.
He lies not here: not close beside the standard.
Here fell the truest, manliest hearts of England.
Go further hence and find him.

Aldwyth. She is crazed!
Edith. That doth not matter either.
Lower the light.
He must be here.

Enter two Canons, OSGOD and ATHELRIC, with torches. They turn over the dead bodies and examine them as they pass.

Osgod. I think that this is Thurkill.
Athelric. More likely Godric.
Osgod. I am sure this body is Alfwig, the king's uncle.
Athelric. So it is!
No, no — brave Gurth, one gash from brow to knee!

Osgod. And here is Leofwin.
Edith. And here is *He*!
Aldwyth. Harold? Oh no — nay, if it were — my God,
They have so maim'd and murder'd all his face
There is no man can swear to him.
Edith. But one woman! Look you, we never mean to part again. I have found him, I am happy.
Was there not someone ask'd me for forgiveness?
I yield it freely, being the true wife Of this dead King, who never bore revenge.

Enter COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM MALET.

William. Who be these women? And what body is this?
Edith. Harold, thy better!
William. Ay, and what art thou?
Edith. His wife!
Malet. Not true, my girl, here is the Queen! [Pointing out Aldwyth.
William (to Aldwyth). Wast thou his Queen?
Aldwyth. I was the Queen of Wales.

William. Why then of England. Madam, fear us not.
(To Malet.) Knowest thou this other?
Malet. When I visited England, Some held she was his wife in secret — some — Well — some believed she was his paramour.
Edith. Norman, thou liest! liars all of you; Your Saints and all! I am his wife! and she — For look, our marriage ring!
[She draws it off the finger of Harold.
I lost it somehow — I lost it, playing with it when I was wild.
That bred the doubt! but I am wiser now . . . I am too wise . . . Will none among you all Bear me true witness — only for this once — That I have found it here again?
[She puts it on.
And thou, Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.
[Falls on the body and dies.
William. Death! — and enough of death for this one day, The day of St. Calixtus, and the day, My day when I was born.
Malet. And this dead king's Who, king or not, hath kinglike fought and fallen, His birthday, too. It seems but yesterday I held it with him in his English halls, His day, with all his roofteree ringing "Harold," Before he fell into the snare of Guy; When all men counted Harold would be king, And Harold was most happy.
William. Thou art half English. Take them away!
Malet, I vow to build a church to God Here on the hill of battle; let our high altar Stand where their standard fell . . . where these two lie.

Take them away, I do not love to see
them.

Pluck the dead woman off the dead
man, Malet!

Malet. Faster than ivy. Must I
hack her arms off?

How shall I part them?

William. Leave them. Let them be!
Bury him and his paramour together.
He that was false in oath to me, it
seems

Was false to his own wife. We will
not give him

A Christian burial: yet he was a war-
rior,

And wise, yea truthful, till that
blighted vow

Which God avenged to-day.

Wrap them together in a purple cloak
And lay them both upon the waste
sea-shore

At Hastings, there to guard the land
for which

He did forswear himself — a warrior
— ay,

And but that Holy Peter fought for us,
And that the false Northumbrian held
aloof,

And save for that chance arrow which
the Saints

Sharpen'd and sent against him —
who can tell? —

Three horses had I slain beneath me:
twice

I thought that all was lost. Since I
knew battle,
And that was from my boyhood,
never yet —

No, by the splendor of God — have I
fought men
Like Harold and his brethren, and his
guard

Of English. Every man about his king
Fell where he stood. They loved him:
and, pray God

My Normans may but move as true
with me

To the door of death. Of one self-
stock at first,

Make them again one people — Nor-
man, English;

And English, Norman; we should
have a hand

To grasp the world with, and a foot
to stamp it . . .

Flat. Praise the Saints. It is over.
No more blood!

I am king of England, so they thwart
me not,

And I will rule according to their laws.
(To Aldwyth.) Madam, we will en-
treat thee with all honor.

Aldwyth. My punishment is more
than I can bear.

THE LOVER'S TALE.

THE original Preface to "The Lover's Tale" states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends however who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light — accompanied with a reprint of the sequel — a work of my mature life — "The Golden Supper"?

May, 1879.

ARGUMENT.

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

I.

HERE far away, seen from the top-most cliff,
Filling with purple gloom the vacancies
Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down rare sails,
White as white clouds, floated from sky to sky.
Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,
Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,
Where the chafed breakers of the outer sea
Sank powerless, as anger falls aside
And withers on the breast of peaceful love;
Thou didst receive the growth of pines that fledged
The hills that watch'd thee, as Love watcheth Love,
In thine own essence, and delight thyself

To make it wholly thine on sunny days.
Keep thou thy name of "Lover's Bay." See, sirs,
Even now the Goddess of the Past, that takes
The heart, and sometimes touches but one string
That quivers, and is silent, and sometimes
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd chords
To some old melody, begins to play
That air which pleased her first. I feel thy breath;
I come, great Mistress of the ear and eye:
Thy breath is of the pinewood; and tho' years
Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy strait
Betwixt the native land of Love and me,
Breathe but a little on me, and the sail
Will draw me to the rising of the sun,

The lucid chambers of the morning star,
And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,
To pass my hand across my brows,
and muse
On those dear hills, that never more
will meet
The sight that throbs and aches be-
neath my touch,
As tho' there beat a heart in either
eye;
For when the outer lights are darken'd
thus,
The memory's vision hath a keener
edge.
It grows upon me now — the semi-
circle
Of dark-blue waters and the narrow
fringe
Of curving beach — its wreaths of
dripping green —
Its pale pink shelis — the summer-
house aloft
That open'd on the pines with doors
of glass,
A mountain nest — the pleasure-boat
that rock'd,
Light-green with its own shadow, keel
to keel,
Upon the dappled dimplings of the
wave,
That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope !
They come, they crowd upon me all
at once —
Moved from the cloud of unforgotten
things,
That sometimes on the horizon of the
mind
Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in
storm —
Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me
— days
Of dewy dawning and the amber
eyes
When thou and I, Camilla, thou and
I
Were borne about the bay or safely
moor'd

Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where
the tide
Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all
without
The slowly-ridging rollers on the
cliffs
Clash'd, calling to each other, and
thro' the arch
Down those loud waters, like a setting
star,
Mixt with the gorgeous west the light-
house shone,
And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell
Would often loiter in her balmy
blue,
To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love
Waver'd at anchor with me, when day
hung
From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy
halls;
Gleams of the water-circles as they
broke,
Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about
her lips,
Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,
Leapt like a passing thought across
her eyes ;
And mine with one that will not pass,
till earth
And heaven pass too, dwelt on my
heaven, a face
Most starry-fair, but kindled from
within
As 'twere with dawn. She was dark-
hair'd, dark-eyed :
Oh, such dark eyes ! a single glance
of them
Will govern a whole life from birth
to death,
Careless of all things else, led on
with light
In trances and in visions : look at
them,
You lose yourself in utter ignorance;
You cannot find their depth ; for they
go back,
And farther back, and still withdraw
themselves
Quite into the deep soul, that ever-
more

Fresh springing from her fountains in
the brain,
Still pouring thro', floods with redundant life
Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago
I should have died, if it were possible
To die in gazing on that perfectness
Which I do bear within me: I had
died,
But from my farthest lapse, my latest ebb,
Thine image, like a charm of light
and strength
Upon the waters, push'd me back
again
On these deserted sands of barren
life.
Tho' from the deep vault where the
heart of Hope
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the
dark—
Forgetting how to render beautiful
Her countenance with quick and
healthful blood—
Thou didst not sway me upward;
could I perish
While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,
Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's
quiet urn
For ever? He, that saith it, hath
o'er-stept
The slippery footing of his narrow
wit,
And fall'n away from judgment.
Thou art light,
To which my spirit leaneth all her
flowers,
And length of days, and immortality
Of thought, and freshness ever self-
renew'd.
For Time and Grief abode too long
with Life,
And, like all other friends i' the world,
at last
They grew aweary of her fellowship:
So Time and Grief did beckon unto
Death,
And Death drew nigh and beat the
doors of Life;

But thou didst sit alone in the inner
house,
A wakeful portress, and didst parle
with Death,—
"This is a charmed dwelling which I
old;"
So Death gave back, and would no
further come.
Yet is my life nor in the present time,
Nor in the present place. To me
alone,
Push'd from his chair of regal heri-
tage,
The Present is the vassal of the Past:
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,
And cannot die, and am, in having
been—
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,
Thrust forward on to-day and out of
place;
A body journeying onward, sick with
toil,
The weight as if of age upon my
limbs,
The grasp of hopeless grief about my
heart,
And all the senses weaken'd, save in
that,
Which long ago they had glean'd and
garner'd up
Into the granaries of memory—
The clear brow, bulwark of the
precious brain,
Chink'd as you see, and seam'd — and
all the while
The light soul twines and mingles
with the growths
Of vigorous early days, attracted,
won,
Married, made one with, molten into
all
The beautiful in Past or place,
And like the all-enduring camel,
driven
Far from the diamond fountain by the
palms,
Who toils across the middle moonlit
nights,
Or when the white heats of the blinding
noons
Beat from the concave sand; yet in
him keeps

A draught of that sweet fountain that
he loves,
To stay his feet from falling, and his
spirit
From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,
When I began to love. How should
I tell you ?
Or from the after-fulness of my heart,
Flow back again unto my slender
spring
And first of love, tho' every turn and
depth
Between is clearer in my life than all
Its present flow. Ye know not what
ye ask.
How should the broad and open flower
tell
What sort of bud it was, when, prest
together
In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken
folds,
It seem'd to keep its sweetness to it-
self,
Yet was not the less sweet for that it
seem'd ?
For young Life knows not when young
Life was born,
But takes it all for granted: neither
Love,
Warm in the heart, his cradle, can
remember
Love in the womb, but resteth satis-
fied,
Looking on her that brought him to
the light:
Or as men know not when they fall
asleep
Into delicious dreams, our other life,
So know I not when I began to love.
This is my sum of knowledge — that
my love
Grew with myself — say rather, was
my growth,
My inward sap, the hold I have on
earth,
My outward circling air wherewith I
breathe,
Which yet upholds my life, and ever-
more
Is to me daily life and daily death;

For how should I have lived and not
have loved ?
Can ye take off the sweetness from
the flower,
The color and the sweetness from the
rose,
And place them by themselves; or set
apart
Their motions and their brightness
from the stars,
And then point out the flower or the
star ?
Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,
And tell me where I am ? "Tis even
thus :
In that I live I love ; because I love
I live : whate'er is fountain to the one
Is fountain to the other; and whene'er
Our God unknits the riddle of the
one,
There is no shade or fold of mystery
Swathing the other.

Many, many years,
(For they seem many and my most of
life,
And well I could have linger'd in that
porch,
So unproportion'd to the dwelling-
place.)
In the Maydews of childhood, opposite
The flush and dawn of youth, we lived
together,
Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father
died,
And he was happy that he saw it not;
But I and the first daisy on his grave
From the same clay came into light
at once.
As Love and I do number equal years,
So she, my love, is of an age with me.
How like each other was the birth of
each !
On the same morning, almost the same
hour,
Under the selfsame aspect of the stars,
(Oh falsehood of all starcraft!) we
were born.
How like each other was the birth of
each !

The sister of my mother — she that bore
 Camilla close beneath her beating heart,
 Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,
 With its true-touched pulses in the flow
 And hourly visitation of the blood,
 Sent notes of preparation manifold,
 And mellow'd echoes of the outer world —
 My mother's sister, mother of my love,
 Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,
 One twofold mightier than the other was,
 In giving so much beauty to the world,
 And so much wealth as God had charged her with —
 Loathing to put it from herself for ever,
 Left her own life with it; and dying thus,
 Crown'd with her highest act the placid face
 And breathless body of her good deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She was motherless
 And I without a father. So from each
 Of those two pillars which from earth uphold
 Our childhood, one had fallen away, and all
 The careful burthen of our tender years
 Trembled upon the other. He that gave
 Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd
 All lovingkindnesses, all offices
 Of watchful care and trembling tenderness.
 He waked for both: he pray'd for both: he slept
 Dreaming of both: nor was his love the less
 Because it was divided, and shot forth

Boughs on each side, laden with wholesome shade,
 Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,
 And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister: on one arm
 The flaxen ringlets of our infancies
 Wander'd, the while we rested: one soft lap
 Pillow'd us both: a common light of eyes
 Was on us as we lay: our baby lips,
 Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence
 The stream of life, one stream, one life, one blood,
 One sustenance, which, still as thought grew large,
 Still larger moulding all the house of thought,
 Made all our tastes and fancies like, perhaps —
 All — all but one; and strange to me, and sweet,
 Sweet thro' strange years to know that whatsoe'er
 Our general mother meant for me alone,
 Our mutual mother dealt to both of us:
 So what was earliest mine in earliest life,
 I shared with her in whom myself remains.
 As was our childhood, so our infancy,
 They tell me, was a very miracle
 Of fellow-feeling and communion.
 They tell me that we would not be alone, —
 We cried when we were parted; when I wept,
 Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,
 Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we loved
 The sound of one-another's voices more
 Than the gray cuckoo loves his name, and learn'd
 To lisp in tune together; that we slept

In the same cradle always, face to face,
 Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing lip,
 Folding each other, breathing on each other,
 Dreaming together (dreaming of each other
 They should have added), till the morning light
 Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy pane
 Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we woke
 To gaze upon each other. If this be true,
 At thought of which my whole soul languishes
 And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath — as tho'
 A man in some still garden should infuse
 Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,
 Till, drunk with its own wine, and overfull
 Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,
 It fall on its own thorns — if this be true —
 And that way my wish leads me ever more
 Still to believe it — 'tis so sweet a thought,
 Why in the utter stillness of the soul
 Doth question'd memory answer not, nor tell
 Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,
 Mostloveliest, earthly-heavenliest harmony?
 O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,
 Green prelude, April promise, glad new year
 Of Being, which with earliest violets
 Andlavish carol of clear-throated larks
 Fill'd all the March of life! — I will not speak of thee.
 These have not seen thee, these can never know thee,
 They cannot understand me. Pass we then
 A term of eighteen years. Ye would but laugh,

If I should tell you how I hoard in thought
 The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient crones,
 Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,
 Which are as gems set in my memory,
 Because she learnt them with me; or what use
 To know her father left us just before
 The daffodil was blown? or how we found
 The dead man cast upon the shore? All this
 Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds
 But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of mine
 Is traced with flame. Move with me to the event.
 There came a glorious morning, such a one
 As dawns but once a season. Mercury
 On such a morning would have flung himself
 From cloud to cloud, and swum with balanced wings
 To some tall mountain: when I said to her,
 "A day for Gods to stoop," she answered. "Ay,
 And men to soar;" for as that other gazed,
 Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,
 The prophet and the chariot and the steeds,
 Suck'd into oneness like a little star
 Were drunk into the inmost blue, we stood.
 When first we came from out the pines at noon,
 With hands for eaves, uplooking and almost
 Waiting to see some blessed shape in heaven,
 So bathed we were in brilliance. Never yet
 Before or after have I known the spring
 Pour with such sudden deluges of light

Into the middle summer; for that day
 Love, rising, shook his wings, and
 charged the winds
 With spiced May-sweets from bound
 to bound, and blew
 Fresh fire into the sun, and from
 within
 Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent
 his soul
 Into the songs of birds, and touch'd
 far-off
 His mountain-altars, his high hills,
 with flame
 Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound :
 The great pine shook with lonely
 sounds of joy
 That came on the sea-wind. As
 mountain streams
 Our blood ran free : the sunshine
 seem'd to brood
 More warmly on the heart than on
 the brow.
 We often paused, and, looking back,
 we saw
 The clefts and openings in the moun-
 tains fill'd
 With the blue valley and the glisten-
 ing brooks,
 And all the low dark groves, a land
 of love !
 A land of promise, a land of memory,
 A land of promise flowing with the
 milk
 And honey of delicious memories !
 And down to sea, and far as eye could
 ken,
 Each way from verge to verge a Holy
 Land,
 Still growing holier as you near'd the
 bay,
 For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd
 The grassy platform on some hill, I
 stoop'd,
 I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her
 brows
 And mine made garlands of the self-
 same flower,
 Which she took smiling, and with my
 work thus

Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or
 twice she told me
 (For I remember all things) to let grow
 The flowers that run poison in their
 veins.
 She said, "The evil flourish in the
 world."
 Then playfully she gave herself the
 lie —
 "Nothing in nature is unbeautiful ;
 So, brother, pluck and spare not."
 So I wove
 Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem,
 "whose flower,
 Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sun-
 rise,
 Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,
 Is without sweetness, but who crowns
 himself
 Above the naked poisons of his heart
 In his old age." A graceful thought
 of hers
 Grav'n on my fancy ! And oh, how
 like a nymph,
 A stately mountain nymph she look'd !
 how native
 Unto the hills she trod on ! While I
 gazed
 My coronal slowly disentwined itself
 And fell between us both ; tho' while
 I gazed
 My spirit leap'd as with those thrills
 of bliss
 That strike across the soul in prayer,
 and show us
 That we are surely heard. Methought
 a light
 Burst from the garland I had wov'n,
 and stood
 A solid glory on her bright black hair ;
 A light methought broke from her
 dark, dark eyes,
 And shot itself into the singing winds ;
 A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her
 white robe
 As from a glass in the sun, and fell
 about
 My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came
 To what our people call "The Hill of
 Woe."

A bridge is there, that, look'd at from beneath

Seems but a cobweb filament to link
The yawning of an earthquake-cloven chasm.

And thence one night, when all the winds were loud,

A woful man (for so the story went)
Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd himself

Into the dizzy depth below. Below,
Fierce in the strength of far descent,

a stream

Flies with a shatter'd foam along the chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown
with crags:

We mounted slowly; yet to both there came

The joy of life in steepness overcome,
And victories of ascent, and looking down

On all that had look'd down on us;
and joy

In breathing nearer heaven; and joy
to me,

High over all the azure-circled earth,
To breath with her as if in heaven it self;

And more than joy that I to her became

Her guardian and her angel, raising her
Still higher, past all peril, until she saw
Beneath her feet the region far away,
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky brows,

Arise in open prospect—heath and hill,
And hollow lined and wooded to the lips,

And deep-down walls of battlemented rock

Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into spires,

And glory of broad waters interfused,
Whence rose as it were breath and steam of gold,

And over all the great wood rioting
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at intervals

With falling brook or blossom'd bush
—and last,

Framing the mighty landscape to the west,

A purple range of mountain-cones,
between
Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding bursts

The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length
Descending from the point and standing both,

There on the tremulous bridge, that from beneath
Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in air,

We paused amid the splendor. All the west

And ev'n unto the middle south was ribb'd

And barr'd with bloom on bloom.
The sun below,

Held for a space 'twixt cloud and wave, shower'd down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over
That various wilderness a tissue of light'

Unparallel'd. On the other side, the moon,

Half-melted into thin blue air, stood still,

And pale and fibrous as a wither'd leaf,

Not yet endured in presence of His eyes
To induct his lustre; most unloverlike,
Since in his absence full of light and joy,

And giving light to others. But this most,

Next to her presence whom I loved so well,

Spoke loudly even into my inmost heart

As to my outward hearing: the loud stream,

Forth issuing from his portals in the crag

(A visible link unto the home of my heart),

Ran amber toward the west, and nigh the sea

Parting my own loved mountains was received,

Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy
 Of that small bay, which out to open main
 Glow'd intermingling close beneath the sun.
 Spirit of Love! that little hour was bound
 Shut in from Time, and dedicate to thee:
 Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it, and the earth
 They fell on became hallow'd evermore.

We turn'd; our eyes met: hers were bright, and mine
 Were dim with floating tears, that shot the sunset
 In lightnings round me; and my name was borne
 Upon her breath. Henceforth my name has been
 A hallow'd memory like the names of old,
 A center'd, glory-circled memory,
 And a peculiar treasure, brooking not
 Exchange or currency: and in that hour
 A hope flow'd round me, like a golden mist
 Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,
 A moment, ere the onward whirlwind shatter it,
 Waver'd and floated — which was less than Hope,
 Because it lack'd the power of perfect Hope;
 But which was more and higher than all Hope,
 Because all other Hope had lower aim;
 Even that this name to which her gracious lips
 Did lend such gentle utterance, this one name,
 In some obscure hereafter, might inwreathe
 (How lovelier, nobler then!) her life, her love,
 With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart and strength.

"Brother," she said, "let this be call'd henceforth The Hill of Hope;" and I replied, "O sister, My will is one with thine; the Hill of Hope." Nevertheless, we did not change the name.

I did not speak: I could not speak my love.
 Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in lip-depths.
 Love wraps his wings on either side the heart,
 Constraining it with kisses close and warm,
 Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts
 So that they pass not to the shrine of sound.
 Else had the life of that delighted hour Drunk in the largeness of the utterance
 Of Love; but how should Earthly measure mete
 The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimited Love,
 Who scarce can tune his high majestic sense
 Unto the thundersong that wheels the spheres,
 Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,
 And flowing odor of the spacious air,
 Scarce housed within the circle of this Earth,
 Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,
 Which pass with that which breathes them? Sooner Earth
 Might go round Heaven, and the strait girth of Time
 Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,
 Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy hour,
 Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day!
 O Genius of that hour which dost uphold
 Thy coronal of glory like a God,

Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,
Who walk before thee, ever turning
 round
To gaze upon thee till their eyes are
 dim
With dwelling on the light and depth
 of thine,
Thy name is ever worshipp'd among
 hours!
Had I died then, I had not seem'd to
 die,
For bliss stood round me like the light
 of Heaven,—
Had I died then, I had not known the
 death;
Yea had the Power from whose right
 hand the light
Of Life issueth, and from whose left
 hand floweth
The Shadow of Death, perennial efflu-
 ences,
Whereof to all that draw the whole-
 some air,
Somewhile the one must overflow the
 other;
Then had he stemm'd my day with
 night, and driven
My current to the fountain whence it
 sprang,—
Even his own abiding excellence—
On me, methinks, that shock of gloom
 had fall'n
Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged
The other, like the sun I gazed
 upon,
Which seeming for the moment due
 to death,
And dipping his head low beneath the
 verge,
Yet bearing round about him his own
 day.
In confidence of unabated strength,
Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven,
 from light to light,
And holdeth his undimmed forehead
 far
Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the down-
 ward hill;
We past from light to dark. On the
 other side

Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain
 hall,
Which none have fathom'd. If you
 go far in
(The country people rumor) you may
 hear
The moaning of the woman and the
 child,
Shut in the secret chambers of the
 rock.
I too have heard a sound — perchance
 of streams
Running far on within its inmost
 halls,
The home of darkness; but the cav-
 ern-mouth,
Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,
Gives birth to a brawling brook, that
 passing lightly
Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,
Is presently received in a sweet grave
Of eglantines, a place of burial
Far lovelier than its cradle; for un-
 seen,
But taken with the sweetness of the
 place,
It makes a constant bubbling melody
That drowns the nearer echoes. Low-
 er down
Spreads out a little lake, that flood-
 ing, leaves
Low banks of yellow sand; and from
 the woods
That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-
 presses,—
Three cypresses, symbols of mortal
 woe,
That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,
And sitting down upon the golden
 moss,
Held converse sweet and low — low
 converse sweet,
In which our voices bore least part.
 The wind
Told a lovetale beside us, how he woo'd
The waters, and the waters answering
 lisp'd
To kisses of the wind, that, sick with
 love,
Fainted at intervals, and grew again

To utterance of passion. Ye cannot
shape
Fancy so fair as is this memory.
Methought all excellence that ever was
Had drawn herself from many thou-
sand years,
And all the separate Edens of this
earth,
To centre in this place and time. I
listen'd,
And her words stole with most pre-
vailing sweetness
Into my heart, as thronging fancies
come
To boys and girls when summer days
are new,
And soul and heart and body are all
at ease :
What marvel my Camilla told me all ?
It was so happy an hour, so sweet a
place,
And I was as the brother of her blood,
And by that name I moved upon her
breath ;
Dear name, which had too much of
nearness in it
And heralded the distance of this time !
At first her voice was very sweet and
low,
As if she were afraid of utterance ;
But in the onward current of her
speech,
(As echoes of the hollow-banked
brooks
Are fashion'd by the channel which
they keep),
Her words did of their meaning bor-
row sound,
Her cheek did catch the color of her
words.
I heard and trembled, yet I could but
hear ;
My heart paused — my raised eyelids
would not fall,
But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.
I seem'd the only part of Time stood
still,
And saw the motion of all other things ;
While her words, syllable by syllable,
Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear
Fell ; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not
to speak ;

But she spake on, for I did name no
wish,
What marvel my Camilla told me all
Her maiden dignities of Hope and
Love —
“ Perchance,” she said, “ return'd.”
Even then the stars
Did tremble in their stations as I gazed ;
But she spake on, for I did name no
wish,
No wish — no hope. Hope was not
wholly dead,
But breathing hard at the approach
of Death, —
Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine
No longer in the dearest sense of mine —
For all the secret of her inmost heart,
And all the maiden empire of her
mind,
Lay like a map before me, and I saw
There, where I hoped myself to reign
as king,
There, where that day I crown'd my-
self as king,
There in my realm and even on my
throne,
Another! then it seem'd as tho' a link
Of some tight chain within my inmost
frame
Was riven in twain : that life I heeded
not
Flow'd from me, and the darkness of
the grave,
The darkness of the grave and utter
night,
Did swallow up my vision ; at her feet,
Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,
Smit with exceeding sorrow unto
Death.

Then had the earth beneath me
yawning cloven
With such a sound as when an iceberg
splits
From cope to base — had Heaven from
all her doors,
With all her golden thresholds clash-
ing, roll'd
Her heaviest thunder — I had lain as
dead,
Mute, blind and motionless as then I
lay ;

Dead, for henceforth there was no life
for me !
Mute, for henceforth what use were
words to me !
Blind, for the day was as the night to
me !
The night to me was kinder than the
day ;
The night in pity took away my day,
Because my grief as yet was newly
born
Of eyes too weak to look upon the
light ;
And thro' the hasty notice of the ear
Frail Life was startled from the ten-
der love
Of him she brooded over. Would I
had lain
Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound
Round my worn limbs, and the wild
brier had driven
Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaint-
ing brows,
Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.
The wind had blown above me, and the rain
Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded
snake
Had nestled in this bosom-throne of
Love,
But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me.
All too soon
Life (like a wanton too-officious friend,
Who will not hear denial, vain and
rude
With proffer of unwish'd-for services)
Entering all the avenues of sense
Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,
With hated warmth of apprehensive-
ness.
And first the chillness of the sprinkled
brook
Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd
to hear
Its murmur, as the drowning seaman
hears,
Who with his head below the surface
dropt
Listens the muffled booming indistinct
Of the confused floods, and dimly knows

His head shall rise no more: and then
came in
The white light of the weary moon
above,
Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.
Was my sight drunk that it did shape
to me
Him who should own that name? Were
it not well
If so be that the echo of that name
Ringing within the fancy had updriven
A fashion and a phantasm of the
form
It should attach to? Phantom!—
had the ghastliest
That ever lusted for a body, sucking
The foul steam of the grave to thicken
by it,
There in the shuddering moonlight
brought its face
And what it has for eyes as close to
mine
As he did—better that than his, than
he
The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the
beloved,
The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,
The low-voiced, tender spirited Lionel,
All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.
O how her choice did leap forth from
his eyes!
O how her love did clothe itself in
smiles
About his lips! and — not one mo-
ment's grace —
Then when the effect weigh'd seas
upon my head
To come my way! to twit me with the
cause!

Was not the land as free thro' all
her ways
To him as me? Was not his wont to
walk
Between the going light and growing
night?
Had I not learnt my loss before he
came?
Could that be more because he came
my way?
Why should he not come my way if
he would?

And yet to-night, to-night — when all my wealth
 Flash'd from me in a moment and I fell
 Beggar'd for ever — why should he come my way
 Robed in those robes of light I must not wear,
 With that great crown of beams about his brows —
 Come like an angel to a damned soul,
 To tell him of the bliss he had with God —
 Come like a careless and a greedy heir
 That scarce can wait the reading of the will
 Before he takes possession ? Was mine a mood
 To be invaded rudely, and not rather A sacred, secret unapproached woe,
 Unspeakable ? I was shut up with Grief ;
 She took the body of my past delight, Narded and swathed and balm'd it for herself,
 And laid it in a sepulchre of rock Never to rise again. I was led mute Into her temple like a sacrifice ; I was the High Priest in her holiest place, Not to be loudly broken in upon.

Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy as these well-nigh O'erbore the limits of my brain : but he Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm upstay'd. I thought it was an adder's fold, and once I strove to disengage myself, but fail'd. Being so feeble : she bent above me, too ; Wan was her cheek ; for whatsoe'er of blight Lives in the dewy touch of pity had made The red rose there a pale one — and her eyes — I saw the moonlight glitter on their tears —

And some few drops of that distressful rain Fell on my face, and her long ringlets moved, Drooping and beaten by the breeze, and brush'd My fallen forehead in their to and fro, For in the sudden anguish of her heart Loosed from their simple thrall they had flow'd abroad, And floated on and parted round her neck, Mantling her form halfway. She, when I woke, Something she ask'd, I know not what, and ask'd, Unanswer'd, since I spake not ; for the sound Of that dear voice so musically low, And now first heard with any sense of pain, As it had taken life away before, Choked all the syllables, that strove to rise From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too, From his great hoard of happiness distill'd Some drops of solace ; like a vain rich man, That, having always prosper'd in the world, Folding his hands, deals comfortable words To hearts wounded for ever ; yet, in truth, Fair speech was his and delicate of phrase, Falling in whispers on the sense, address'd More to the inward than the outward ear, As rain of the midsummer midnight soft, Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and the green Of the dead spring : but mine was wholly dead, No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for me.

Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd wrong ?
 And why was I to darken their pure love,
 If, as I found, they two did love each other,
 Because my own was darken'd ? Why was I
 To cross between their happy star and them ?
 To stand a shadow by their shining doors,
 And vex them with my darkness ? Did I love her ?
 Ye know that I did love her ; to this present
 My full-orb'd love has waned not.
 Did I love her,
 And could I look upon her tearful eyes ?
 What had *she* done to weep ? Why should *she* weep ?
 O innocent of spirit — let my heart break rather — whom the gentlest airs of Heaven
 Should kiss with an unwonted gentleness.
 Her love did murder mine ? What then ? She deem'd
 I wore a brother's mind : she call'd me brother :
 She told me all her love : she shall not weep.

The brightness of a burning thought, awhile
 In battle with the glooms of my dark will,
 Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up
 There on the depth of an unfathom'd woe
 Reflex of action. Starting up at once,
 As from a dismal dream of my own death,
 I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love ;
 I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she lov'd,
 And laid it in her own, and sent my cry
 Thro' the blank night to Him who loving made

The happy and the unhappy love,
 that He would hold the hand of blessing over them,
 Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his bride !
 Let them so love that men and boys may say,
 " Lo ! how they love each other !" till their love
 Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all Known, when their faces are forgot in the land —
 One golden dream of love, from which may death
 Awake them with heaven's music in a life
 More living to some happier happiness,
 Swallowing its precedent in victory.
 And as for me, Camilla, as for me, — The dew of tears is an unwholesome dew,
 They will but sicken the sick plant the more.
 Deem that I love thee but as brothers do,
 So shalt thou love me still as sisters do ;
 Or if thou dream aught farther, dream but how
 I could have loved thee, had there been none else
 To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I spake,
 When I beheld her weep so ruefully ;
 For sure my love should ne'er indue the front
 And mask of Hate, who lives on others' moans.
 Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter draughts,
 And batten on her poisons ? Love forbid !
 Love passeth not the threshold of cold Hate,
 And Hate is strange beneath the roof of Love.

O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up
these tears
Shed for the love of Love; for tho'
mine image,
The subject of thy power, be cold in
her,
Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the
source
Of these sad tears, and feeds their
downward flow.
So Love, arraign'd to judgment and
to death,
Received unto himself a part of
blame,
Being guiltless, as an innocent pri-
soner,
Who, when the woful sentence hath
been past,
And all the clearness of his fame hath
gone
Beneath the shadow of the curse of
man,
First falls asleep in swoon, wherfrom
awaked,
And looking round upon his tearful
friends,
Forthwith and in his agony con-
ceives
A shameful sense as of a cleaving
crime —
For whence without some guilt should
such grief be ?

So died that hour, and fell into the
abyss
Of forms outworn, but not to me out-
worn,
Who never hail'd another — was there
one ?
There might be one — one other, worth
the life
That made it sensible. So that hour
died
Like odor rapt into the winged
wind
Borne into alien lands and far away.
There be some hearts so airily built,
that they,
They — when their love is wreck'd —
if Love can wreck —
On that sharp ridge of utmost doom
ride highly

Above the perilous seas of Change
and Chance;
Nay, more, hold out the lights of
cheerfulness;
As the tall ship, that many a dreary
year
Knit to some dismal sandbank far at
sea,
All thro' the livelong hours of utter
dark,
Showers slanting light upon the dolor-
ous wave.
For me — what light, what gleam on
those black ways
Where Love could walk with banish'd
Hope no more ?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters
fair;
Love's arms were wreath'd about the
neck of Hope,
And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love
drew in her breath
In that close kiss, and drank her
whisper'd tales.
They said that Love would die when
Hope was gone,
And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd
after Hope;
At last she sought out Memory, and
they trod
The same old paths where Love had
walk'd with Hope,
And Memory fed the soul of Love
with tears.

II.

FROM that time forth I would not see
her more;
But many weary moons I lived
alone —
Alone, and in the heart of the great
forest.
Sometimes upon the hills beside the
sea
All day I watch'd the floating isles of
shade,
And sometimes on the shore, upon the
sands
Insensibly I drew her name, until
The meaning of the letters shot into

My brain ; anon the wanton billow
wash'd
Them over, till they faded like my
love.
The hollow caverns heard me—the
black brooks
Of the midforest heard me—the soft
winds,
Laden with thistledown and seeds of
flowers,
Paused in their course to hear me, for
my voice
Was all of thee : the merry linnet
knew me,
The squirrel knew me, and the dragon-
fly
Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.
The rough brier tore my bleeding
palms ; the hemlock,
Brow-high, did strike my forehead as
I past ;
Yet trod I not the wildflower in my
path,
Nor bruised the wildbird's egg.

Was this the end ?
Why grew we then together in one
plot ?
Why fed we from one fountain ? drew
one sun ?
Why were our mothers' branches of
one stem ?
Why were we one in all things, save
in that
Where to have been one had been the
cope and crown
Of all I hoped and fear'd ? — if that
same nearness
Were father to this distance, and that
one
Vauntcourier to the *double* ? if Affec-
tion
Living slew Love, and Sympathy
hew'd out
The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy ?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the
hill
Where last we roam'd together, for the
sound
Of the loud stream was pleasant, and
the wind

Came wooingly with woodbine smells.
Sometimes
All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,
Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-
cones
That spired above the wood ; and with
mad hand
Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-
screen,
I cast them in the noisy brook be-
neath,
And watch'd them till they vanish'd
from my sight
Beneath the bower of wreathed eglan-
tines :
And all the fragments of the living
rock
(Huge blocks, which some old trem-
bling of the world
Had loosen'd from the mountain, till
they fell
Half-digging their own graves) these
in my agony
Did I make bare of all the golden
moss,
Wherewith the dashing runnel in the
spring
Had liveried them all over. In my
brain
The spirit seem'd to flag from thought
to thought,
As moonlight wandering thro' a mist:
my blood
Crept like marsh drains thro' all my
languid limbs ;
The motions of my heart seem'd far
within me,
Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its
pulses ;
And yet it shook me, that my frame
would shudder,
As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.
But over the deep graves of Hope and
Fear,
And all the broken palaces of the
Past,
Brooded one master-passion evermore,
Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky
Above some fair metropolis, earth-
shock'd,—
Hung round with ragged rims and
burning folds,—

Embathing all with wild and woful
hues,
Great hills of ruins, and collapsed
masses
Of thundershaken columns indistinct,
And fused together in the tyrannous
light —
Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was
no more,
Some one had told me she was dead,
and ask'd
If I would see her burial: then I seem'd
To rise, and through the forest-shadow
borne
With more than mortal swiftness, I
ran down
The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon
Therear of a procession, curving round
The silver-sheeted bay: in front of
which
Six stately virgins, all in white, upbear
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest
lawn,
Wreathed round the bier with gar-
lands: in the distance,
From out the yellow woods upon the
hill
Look'd forth the summit and the pina-
cles
Of a gray steeple — thence at intervals
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,
Save those six virgins which upheld
the bier,
Were stoled from head to foot in flow-
ing black;
One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd
his brow,
And he was loud in weeping and in
praise
Of her we follow'd: a strong sympathy
Shook all my soul: I flung myself
upon him
In tears and cries: I told him all my
love,
How I had loved her from the first;
wherat
He shrank and howl'd, and from his
brow drew back
His hand to push me from him; and
the face,

The very face and form of Lionel
Flash'd thro' my eyes into my inner-
most brain,
And at his feet I seem'd to faint and
fall,
To fall and die away. I could not rise
Albeit I strove to fellow. They past
on,
The lordly Phantasms! in their float-
ing folds
They past and were no more: but I
had fallen
Prone by the dashing runnel on the
grass.

Alway the inaudible invisible
thought,
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,
Shaped by the audible and visible,
Moulded the audible and visible;
All crisped sounds of wave and leaf
and wind,
Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain;
The cloud-pavilion'd element, the
wood,
The mountain, the three cypresses, the
cave,
Storm, sunset, glows and glories of
the moon
Below black firs, when silent-creeping
winds
Laid the long night in silver streaks
and bars,
Were wrought into the tissue of my
dream:
The moanings in the forest, the loud
brook,
Cries of the partridge like a rusty key
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-
hawk-whirr
Awoke me not, but were a part of
sleep,
And voices in the distance calling to me
And in my vision bidding me dream on,
Like sounds without the twilight realm
of dreams,
Which wander round the bases of the
hills,
And murmur at the low-dropt eaves
of sleep,
Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes
The vision had fair prelude, in the end

Opening on darkness, stately vesti-
bules
To caves and shows of Death: whether
the mind,
With some revenge — even to itself
unknown, —
Made strange division of its suffering
With her, whom' to have suffering
view'd had been
Extremest pain; or that the clear-eyed
Spirit,
Being blunted in the Present, grew at
length
Prophetical and prescient of whate'er
The Future had in store: or that
which most
Enchains belief, the sorrow of my
spirit
Was of so wide a compass it took in
All I had loved, and my dull agony,
Ideally to her transferr'd, became
Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;
Alone I sat with her: about my
brow
Her warm breath floated in the utter-
ance
Of silver-chorded tones: her lips
were sunder'd
With smiles of tranquil bliss, which
broke in light
Like morning from her eyes — her
eloquent eyes,
(As I have seen them many a hundred
times)
Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro'
mine down rain'd
Their spirit-searching splendors. As
a vision
Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd
In damp and dismal dungeons under-
ground,
Confined on points of faith, when
strength is shock'd
With torment, and expectancy of
worse
Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged
walls,
All unawares before his half-shut eyes,
Comes in upon him in the dead of
night,

And with the excess of sweetness and
of awe,
Makes the heart tremble, and the
sight run over
Upon his steely gyves; so those fair
eyes
Shone on my darkness, forms which
ever stood
Within the magic cirque of memory,
Invisible but deathless, waiting still
The edict of the will to reassume
The semblance of those rare realities
Of which they were the mirrors. Now
the light
Which was their life, burst through
the cloud of thought
Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room
Within the summer-house of which I
spake,
Hung round with paintings of the sea,
and one
A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved
prow
Clambering, the mast bent and the
ravin wind
In her sail roaring. From the outer
day,
Betwixt the close-set ivies came a
broad
And solid beam of isolated light,
Crowded with driving atomies, and
fell
Slanting upon that picture, from prime
youth
Well-known well-loved. She drew it
long ago
Forthgazing on the waste and open
sea,
One morning when the upblown bil-
low ran
Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I
had pour'd
Into the shadowing pencil's naked
forms
Color and life: it was a bond and seal
Of friendship, spoken of with tearful
smiles;
A monument of childhood and of
love;
The poesy of childhood; my lost love

Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it together
 In mute and glad remembrance, and each heart
 Grew closer to the other, and the eye
 Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing like
 The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-couch'd —
 A beauty which is death; when all at once
 That painted vessel, as with inner life,
 Began to heave upon that painted sea;
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats, made the ground
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul, life
 And breath and motion, past and flow'd away
 To those unreal billows: round and round.
 A whirlwind caught and bore us; mighty gyres
 Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-driven
 Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she shriek'd;
 My heart was cloven with pain; I wound my arms
 About her: we whirl'd giddily; the wind
 Sung; but I clasp'd her without fear: her weight
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim eyes,
 And parted lips which drank her breath, down-hung
 The jaws of Death: I, groaning, from me flung
 Her empty phantom: all the sway and whirl
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and ever.

III.

I CAME one day and sat among the stones

Strewn in the entry of the moaning cave;
 A morning air, sweet after rain, ran over
 The rippling levels of the lake, and blew
 Coolness and moisture and all smells of bud
 And foliage from the dark and dripping woods
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook and throb'd
 From temple unto temple. To what height
 The day had grown I know not. Then came on me
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and all
 The vision of the bier. As heretofore
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd his brow.
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen bell
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the shore
 Sloped into louder surf: those that went with me,
 And those that held the bier before my face,
 Moved with one spirit round about the bay,
 Trod swifter steps; and while I walk'd with these
 In marvel at that gradual change, I thought
 Four bells instead of one began to ring,
 Four merry bells, four merry marriage-bells,
 In clang ing cadence jangling peal on peal —
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-bells.
 Then those who led the van, and those in rear,
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bacchanals
 Fled onward to the steeple in the woods:
 I, too, was borne along and felt the blast
 Beat on my heated eyelids: all at once

The front rank made a sudden halt;
the bells
Lapsed into frightful stillness; the
surge fell
From thunder into whispers; those six
maids
With shrieks and ringing laughter on
the sand
Threw down the bier; the woods upon
the hill
Waved with a sudden gust that sweep-
ing down
Took the edges of the pall, and blew
it far
Until it hung, a little silver cloud
Over the sounding seas: I turn'd: my
heart
Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the
hand,
Waiting to see the settled countenance
Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading
flowers.
But she from out her death-like
chrysalis,
She from her bier, as into fresher
life,
My sister, and my cousin, and my
love,
Leapt lightly clad in bridal white—
her hair
Studded with one rich Provence rose
—a light
Of smiling welcome round her lips—
her eyes
And cheeks as bright as when she
climb'd the hill.
One hand she reach'd to those that
came behind,
And while I mused nor yet endured
to take
So rich a prize, the man who stood
with me
Stept gaily forward, throwing down
his robes,
And claspt her hand in his: again the
bells
Jangled and clang'd: again the stormy
surf
Crash'd in the shingle: and the whirling
rout
Led by those two rush'd into dance,
and fled

Wind-footed to the steeple in the
woods,
Till they were swallow'd in the leafy
bower,
And I stood sole beside the vacant
bier.

There, there, my latest vision — then
the event!

IV.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.¹

(Another speaks.)

He flies the event: he leaves the event
to me:
Poor Julian — how he rush'd away;
the bells,
Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear
and heart —
But cast a parting glance at me, you
saw,
As who should say "Continue." Well
he had
One golden hour — of triumph shall I
say?
Solace at least — before he left his
home.

Would you had seen him in that
hour of his!
He moved thro' all of it majesti-
cally —
Restrain'd himself quite to the close —
but now —

Whether they were his lady's mar-
riage bells,
Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
I never ask'd: but Lionel and the girl
Were wedded, and our Julian came
again
Back to his mother's house among the
pines.
But these, their gloom, the mountains
and the Bay,
The whole land weigh'd him down as
Aetna does
The Giant of Mythology: he would
go,

¹ This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio. See Introduction, p. 647.

Would leave the land for ever, and
had gone
Surely, but for a whisper, "Go not
yet,"
Some warning — sent divinely — as it
seem'd
By that which follow'd — but of this
I deem
As of the visions that he told — the
event
Glanced back upon them in his after
life,
And partly made them — tho' he knew
it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not
look at her —
No not for months: but, when the
eleventh moon
After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,
Heard yet once more the tolling bell,
and said,
Would you could toll me out of life,
but found —
All softly as his mother broke it to
him —
A crueller reason than a crazy ear,
For that low knell tolling his lady
dead —
Dead — and had lain three days with-
out a pulse:
All that look'd on her had pronounced
her dead.
And so they bore her (for in Julian's
land
They never nail a dumb head up in
elm),
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of
heaven,
And laid her in the vault of her own
kin.

What did he then? not die: he is
here and hale —
Not plunge headforemost from the
mountain there,
And leave the name of Lover's Leap:
not he :
He knew the meaning of the whisper
now,
Thought that he knew it. "This, I
stay'd for this;

O love, I have not seen you for so
long.
Now, now, will I go down into the
grave,
I will be all alone with all I love,
And kiss her on the lips. She is his
no more:
The dead returns to me, and I go down
To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so
He rose and went, and entering the
dim vault,
And, making there a sudden light, beheld
All round about him that which all
will be.
The light was but a flash, and went
again.
Then at the far end of the vault he saw
His lady with the moonlight on her
face;
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars
Of black and bands of silver, which
the moon
Struck from an open grating overhead
High in the wall, and all the rest of
her
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of
the vault.

"It was my wish," he said, "to pass,
to sleep,
To rest, to be with her — till the great
day
Peal'd on us with that music which
rights all,
And raised us hand in hand." And
kneeling there
Down in the dreadful dust that once
was man,
Dust, as he said, that once was loving
hearts,
Hearts that had beat with such a love
as mine —
Not such as mine, no, nor for such as
her —
He softly put his arm about her neck
And kiss'd her more than once, till
helpless death
And silence made him bold — nay, but
I wrong him,

He reverenced his dear lady even in death;
 But, placing his true hand upon her heart,
 "O, you warm heart," he moan'd,
 "not even death
 Can chill you all at once :" then starting,
 thought
 His dreams had come again. "Do I wake or sleep ?
 Or am I made immortal, or my love Mortal once more ?" It beat — the heart — it beat :
 Faint — but it beat : at which his own began
 To pulse with such a vehemence that it drown'd
 The feebler motion underneath his hand.
 But when at last his doubts were satisfied,
 He raised her softly from the sepulchre,
 And, wrapping her all over with the cloak
 He came in, and now striding fast, and now
 Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore Holding his golden burthen in his arms,
 So bore her thro' the solitary land Back to the mother's house where she was born.

There the good mother's kindly ministering,
 With half a night's appliances, recall'd Her fluttering life : she rais'd an eye that ask'd
 "Where ?" till the things familiar to her youth
 Had made a silent answer : then she spoke
 "Here ! and how came I here ?" and learning it
 (They told her somewhat rashly as I think)
 At once began to wander and to wail,
 "Ay, but you know that you must give me back :
 Send ! bid him come ;" but Lionel was away —

Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew where.
 "He casts me out," she wept, "and goes" — a wail
 That seeming something, yet was nothing, born
 Not from believing mind, but shatter'd nerve,
 Yet haunting Julian, as her own re-proof
 At some precipitance in her burial.
 Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,
 "Oh yes, and you," she said, "and none but you ?
 For you have given me life and love again,
 And none but you yourself shall tell him of it,
 And you shall give me back when he returns."
 "Stay then a little," answer'd Julian,
 "here,
 And keep yourself, none knowing, to yourself ;
 And I will do your will. I may not stay,
 No, not an hour ; but send me notice of him
 When he returns, and then will I return,
 And I will make a solemn offering of you
 To him you love." And faintly she replied,
 "And I will do your will, and none shall know."

Not know ? with such a secret to be known.
 But all their house was old and loved them both,
 And all the house had known the loves of both ;
 Had died almost to serve them any way,
 And all the land was waste and solitary :
 And then he rode away ; but after this, An hour or two, Camilla's travail came Upon her, and that day a boy was born, Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
There fever seized upon him : myself
 was then
Travelling that land, and meant to
 rest an hour ;
And sitting down to such a base repast,
It makes me angry yet to speak of it —
I heard a groaning overhead, and
 climb'd
The moulder'd stairs (for everything
 was vile)
And in a loft, with none to wait on
him,
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
Raving of dead men's dust and beat-
ing hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
A flat malarian world of reed and rush !
But there from fever and my care of
 him
Sprang up a friendship that may help
 us yet.
For while we roam'd along the dreary
 coast,
And waited for her message, piece by
 piece
I learnt the dearer story of his life ;
And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel,
Found that the sudden wail his lady
 made
Dwelt in his fancy : did he know her
 worth,
Her beauty even ? should he not be
 taught,
Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,
The value of that jewel he had to
 guard ?

Suddenly came her notice and we
 past,
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,
 the soul :
That makes the sequel pure ; tho'
 some of us
Beginning at the sequel know no more.
Not such am I : and yet I say the bird
That will not hear my call, however
 sweet,

But if my neighbor whistle answers
 him —
What matter ? there are others in the
 wood.
Yet when I saw her (and I thought him
 crazed,
Tho' not with such a craziness as needs
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes
 of hers —
Oh ! such dark eyes ! and not her eyes
 alone,
But all from these to where she touch'd
on earth,
For such a craziness as Julian's look'd
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came
To greet us, her young hero in her
 arms !
"Kiss him," she said. " You gave me
 life again.
He, but for you, had never seen it once.
His other father you ! Kiss him, and
 then
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too."

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart !
 his own
Sent such a flame into his face, I
 knew
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him
 there.

But he was all the more resolved to
 go,
And sent at once to Lionel, praying
 him
By that great love they both had
 borne the dead,
To come and revel for one hour with
 him
Before he left the land for evermore ;
And then to friends — they were not
 many — who lived
Scatteringly about that lonely land
 of his,
And bade them to a banquet of fare-
wells.

And Julian made a solemn feast : I
 never
Sat at a costlier ; for all round his hall

From column on to column, as in a wood,
 Not such as here — an equatorial one,
 Great garlands swung and blossom'd;
 and beneath,
 Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,
 Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven
 knows when,
 Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten sun,
 And kept it thro' a hundred years of gloom,
 Yet glowing in a heart of ruby — cups
 Where nymph and god ran ever round
 in gold —
 Others of glass as costly — some with
 gems
 Movable and resettable at will,
 And trebling all the rest in value —
 Ah heavens!
 Why need I tell you all? — suffice to say
 That whatsoever such a house as his,
 And his was old, has in it rare or fair
 Was brought before the guest: and they, the guests,
 Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's eyes
 (I told you that he had his golden hour),
 And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd
 To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his
 And that resolved self-exile from a land
 He never would revisit, such a feast
 So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n than rich,
 But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the hall
 Two great funereal curtains, looping down,
 Parted a little ere they met the floor,
 About a picture of his lady, taken
 Some years before, and falling hid the frame.
 And just above the parting was a lamp:
 So the sweet figure folded round with night

Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a smile.

Well then — our solemn feast — we ate and drank,
 And might — the wines being of such nobleness —
 Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
 And something weird and wild about it all:
 What was it? for our lover seldom spoke,
 Scarce touch'd the meats; but ever and anon
 A priceless goblet with a priceless wine
 Arising, show'd he drank beyond his use;
 And when the feast was near an end, he said:

"There is a custom in the Orient, friends —
 I read of it in Persia — when a man
 Will honor those who feast with him,
 he brings
 And shows them whatsoever he accounts
 Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
 Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.
 This custom — "

Pausing here a moment, all
 The guests broke in upon him with meeting hands
 And cries about the banquet — " Beautiful!
 Who could desire more beauty at a feast?"

The lover answer'd, "There is more than one
 Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not
 Before my time, but hear me to the close.
 This custom steps yet further when the guest
 Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost.
 For after he hath shown him gems or gold,
 He brings and sets before him in rich guise

That which is thrice as beautiful as
these,
The beauty that is dearest to his
heart —
'O my heart's lord, would I could
show you,' he says,
'Ev'n my heart too.' And I propose
to-night
To show you what is dearest to my
heart,
And my heart too.

"But solve me first a doubt.
I knew a man, nor many years ago;
He had a faithful servant, one who
loved
His master more than all on earth
beside.
He falling sick, and seeming close on
death,
His master would not wait until he
died,
But bade his menials bear him from
the door,
And leave him in the public way to
die.
I knew another, not so long ago,
Who found the dying servant, took
him home,
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved
his life.
I ask you now, should this first master
claim
His service, whom does it belong to ?
him
Who thrust him out, or him who saved
his life ?"

This question, so flung down before
the guests,
And balanced either way by each, at
length
When some were doubtful how the
law would hold,
Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of
phrase.
And he beginning languidly — his loss
Weigh'd on him yet — but warming
as he went,

Glanced at the point of law, to pass
it by,
Affirming that as long as either lived,
By all the laws of love and grateful-
ness,
The service of the one so saved was
due
All to the saver — adding, with a
smile,
The first for many weeks — a semi-
smile
As at a strong conclusion — "body
and soul
And life and limbs, all his to work his
will."

Then Julian made a secret sign to
me
To bring Camilla down before them
all.
And crossing her own picture as she
came,
And looking as much lovelier as her-
self
Is lovelier than all others — on her
head
A diamond circlet, and from under
this
A veil, that seemed no more than
gilded air,
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern-
gauze
With seeds of gold — so, with that
grace of hers,
Slow-moving as a wave against the
wind,
That flings a mist behind it in the
sun —
And bearing high in arms the mighty
babe,
The younger Julian, who himself was
crown'd
With roses, none so rosy as himself —
And over all her babe and her the
jewels
Of many generations of his house
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had
decked them out
As for a solemn sacrifice of love —
So she came in : — I am long in telling
it,
I never yet beheld a thing so strange,

Sad, sweet, and strange together—
floated in—
While all the guests in mute amaze-
ment rose—
And slowly pacing to the middle
hall,
Before the board, there paused and
stood, her breast
Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her
feet,
Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
But him she carried, him nor lights
nor feast
Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men;
who cared
Only to use his own, and staring wide
And hungering for the gilt and
jewell'd world
About him, look'd, as he is like to
prove,
When Julian goes, the lord of all he
saw.

"My guests," said Julian: "you
are honor'd now
Ev'n to the uttermost: in her behold
Of all my treasures the most beau-
tiful,
Of all things upon earth the dearest to
me."
Then waving us a sign to seat our-
selves,
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble
too,
And heard him muttering, "So like,
so like;
She never had a sister. I knew none.
Some cousin of his and hers—O God,
so like!"
And then he suddenly ask'd her if
she were.
She shook, and cast her eyes down,
and was dumb.
And then some other question'd if she
came
From foreign lands, and still she did
not speak.
Another, if the boy were hers: but
she

To all their queries answer'd not a
word,
Which made the amazement more,
till one of them
Said, shuddering, "Her spectre!"
But his friend
Replied, in half a whisper, "Not at
least
The spectre that will speak if spoken
to.

Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
Prove, as I almost dread to find her,
dumb!"

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd
all:
"She is but dumb, because in her you
see
That faithful servant whom we spoke
about,
Obedient to her second master now;
Which will not last. I have here to-
night a guest
So bound to me by common love and
loss—
What! shall I bind him more? in his
behalf,
Shall I exceed the Persian, giving
him
That which of all things is the dearest
to me,
Not only showing? and he himself
pronounced
That my rich gift is wholly mine to
give.

"Now all be dumb, and promise all
of you
Not to break in on what I say by
word
Or whisper, while I show you all my
heart."
And then began the story of his love
As here to-day, but not so wordily—
The passionate moment would not
suffer that—
Past thro' his visions to the burial;
thence
Down to this last strange hour in his
own hall;
And then rose up, and with him all
his guests

Once more as by enchantment; all
but he,
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell
again,
And sat as if in chains — to whom he
said :

"Take my free gift, my cousin, for
your wife;
And were it only for the giver's sake,
And tho' she seem so like the one you
lost,
Yet cast her not away so suddenly,
Lest there be none left here to bring
her back :
I leave this land for ever." Here he
ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one
hand,
And bearing on one arm the noble
babe,
He slowly brought them both to
Lionel.
And there the widower husband and
dead wife
Rush'd each at each with a cry, that
rather seem'd

For some new death than for a life
renew'd;
Whereat the very babe began to wail;
At once they turn'd, and caught and
brought him in
To their charm'd circle, and, half kill-
ing him
With kisses, round him closed and
claspt again.
But Lionel, when at last he freed him-
self
From wife and child, and lifted up a
face
All over glowing with the sun of
life,
And love, and boundless thanks —
the sight of this
So frightened our good friend, that turn-
ing to me
And saying, "It is over: let us
go"—
There were our horses ready at the
doors —
We bade them no farewell, but mount-
ing these
He past for ever from his native land;
And I with him, my Julian, back to
mine.

BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS.

TO

ALFRED TENNYSON,

MY GRANDSON.

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one with mine,
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,
Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine,
May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine !

THE FIRST QUARREL.

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.)

I.

"WAIT a little," you say, "you are
sure it'll all come right,"
But the boy was born i' trouble, an'
looks so wan an' so white :
Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I hadn't
to wait for long.
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry.—
No, no, you are doing me
wrong!
Harry and I were married: the boy
can hold up his head,
The boy was born in wedlock, but
after my man was dead;
I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an'
I work an' I wait to the end.
I am all alone in the world, an' you
are my only friend.

II.

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you
the tale o' my life.
When Harry an' I were children, he
call'd me his own little wife;

I was happy when I was with him, an'
sorry when he was away,
An' when we play'd together, I loved
him better than play;
He workt me the daisy chain—he
made me the cowslip ball,
He fought the boys that were rude,
an' I loved him better than all.
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at
home in disgrace,
I never could quarrel with Harry—I
had but to look in his face.

III.

There was a farmer in Dorset of
Harry's kin, that had need
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he
sent, an' the father agreed;
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire
farm for years an' for years;
I walked with him down to the quay,
poor lad, an' we parted in tears.
The boat was beginning to move, we
heard them a-ringring the bell,
"I'll never love any but you, God
bless you, my own little Nell."

IV.

I was a child, an' he was a child, an'
he came to harm;

There was a girl, a hussy, that workt
with him up at the farm,
One had deceived her an' left her
alone with her sin an' her shame,
And so shewas wicked with Harry; the
girl was the most to blame.

v.

And years went over till I that was
little had grown so tall.
The men would say of the maids, "Our
Nelly's the flower of 'em all."
I didn't take heed o' them, but I taught
myself all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when
Harry came home for good.

vi.

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as
happy too,
For I heard it abroad in the fields "I'll
never love any but you";
"I'll never love any but you" the
morning song of the lark,
"I'll never love any but you" the night-
ingale's hymn in the dark.

vii.

And Harry came home at last, but he
look'd at me sidelong and shy,
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so
many years had gone by,
I had grown so handsome and tall —
that I might ha' forgot him
somehow —
For he thought — there were other
lads — he was feard to look
at me now.

viii.

Hard was the frost in the field, we were
married o' Christmas day,
Married among the red berries, an' all
as merry as May —
Those were the pleasant times, my
house an' my man were my
pride,
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel
a-sailing with wind an' tide.

ix.

But work was scant in the Isle, tho'
he tried the villages round,
So Harry went over the Solent to see
if work could be found;
An' he wrote, "I ha' six weeks' work,
little wife, so far as I know;
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an'
kiss you before I go."

x.

So I set to righting the house, for
wasn't he coming that day?
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was
push'd in a corner away,
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a
letter along wi' the rest,
I had better ha' put my naked hand
in a hornets' nest.

xi.

"Sweetheart" — this was the letter —
this was the letter I read —
"You promised to find me work near
you, an' I wish I was dead —
Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you
haven't done it, my lad,
An' I almost died o' your going away,
an' I wish that I had."

xii.

I too wish that I had — in the pleasant
times that had past,
Before I quarrell'd with Harry — my
quarrel — the first an' the last.

xiii.

For Harry came in, an' I flung him
the letter that drove me wild,
An' he told it me all at once, as simple
as any child,
"What can it matter, my lass, what I
did wi' my single life?
I ha' been as true to you as ever a
man to his wife;
An' she wasn't one o' the worst."
"Then," I said, "I'm none o' the
best."
An' he smiled at me, "Ain't you, my
love? Come, come, little wife,
let it rest!"

The man isn't like the woman, no
need to make such a stir."—
But he anger'd me all the more, an' I
said "You were keeping with her,
When I was a-loving you all along an'
the same as before."
An' he didn't speak for a while, an'
he anger'd me more and more.
Then he patted my hand in his gentle
way, "Let bygones be!"
"Bygones! you kept yours hush'd," I
said, "when you married me!
By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' she
— in her shame an' her sin —
You'll have her to nurse my child, if
I die o' my lying in!
You'll make her its second mother! I
hate her — an' I hate you!"
Ah, Harry, my man, you had better
ha' beaten me black an' blue
Than ha' spoken as kind as you did,
when I were so crazy wi' spite,
"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill
all come right."

XIV.

An' he took three turns in the rain,
an' I watch'd him, an' when he
came in
I felt that my heart was hard, he was
all wet thro' to the skin,
An' I never said "off wi' the wet," I
never said "on wi' the dry,"
So I knew my heart was hard, when
he came to bid me goodbye.
"You said that you hated me, Ellen,
but that isn't true, you know;
I am going to leave you a bit — you'll
kiss me before I go?"

Re

XV.

"Going! you're going to her — kiss
her — if you will," I said, —
I was near my time wi' the boy, I must
ha' been light i' my head —
"I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!"
— I didn't know well what I
meant,
But I turn'd my face from him, an' he
turn'd his face an' he went.

XVI.

And then he sent me a letter, "I've
gotten my work to do;
You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I
never loved any but you;
I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry
for what she wrote,
I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go
to-night by the boat."

XVII.

An' the wind began to rise, an' I
thought of him out at sea,
An' I felt I had been to blame; he
was always kind to me.
"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it
'ill all come right" —
An' the boat went down that night —
the boat went down that night.

RIZPAH.

17.—

I.

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind
over land and sea —
And Willy's voice in the wind, "O
mother, come out to me."
Why should he call me to-night, when
he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and
the full moon stares at the snow.

II.

We should be seen, my dear; they
would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the
storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but
am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I
find myself drenched with the
rain.

III.

Anything fallen again? nay — what
was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have num-
ber'd the bones, I have hidden
them all.

What am I saying ? and what are you ?
do you come as a spy ?
Falls ? what falls ? who knows ? As
the tree falls so must it lie.

IV.

Who let her in ? how long has she been ?
you — what have you heard ?
Why did you sit so quiet ? you never
have spoken a word.
O — to pray with me — yes — a lady
— none of their spies —
But the night has crept into my heart,
and begun to darken my eyes.

V.

Ah — you, that have lived so soft,
what should you know of the
night,
The blast and the burning shame and
the bitter frost and the fright ?
I have done it, while you were asleep —
you were only made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together —
and now you may go your way.

VI.

Nay — for it's kind of you, Madam, to
sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I
have only an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before
he went out to die.
"They dared me to do it," he said,
and he never has told me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard
once when he was but a child —
"The farmer dared me to do it," he
said ; he was always so wild —
And idle — and couldn't be idle — my
Willy — he never could rest.
The King should have made him a
soldier, he would have been
one of his best.

VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates,
and they never would let him
be good ;
They swore that he dare not rob the
mail, and he swore that he
would :

And he took no life, but he took one
purse, and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows — I'll
none of it, said my son.

VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and the
lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth — but they kill'd him,
they kill'd him for robbing the
mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show
— we had always borne a good
name —
To be hang'd for a thief — and then
put away — isn't that enough
shame ?
Dust to dust — low down — let us hide !
but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could
stare at him, passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven
and horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer
who kill'd him and hang'd him
there.

IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I had
bid him my last goodbye ;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell.
"O mother !" I heard him cry.
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had
something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The
jailer forced me away.

X.

Then since I couldn't but hear that
cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up : they
fasten'd me down on my bed.
"Mother, O mother!" — he call'd in the
dark to me year after year —
They beat me for that, they beat me
— you know that I couldn't but
hear ;
And then at the last they found I had
grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again — but the
creatures had worked their will.

xli.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone
of my bone was left —
I stole them all from the lawyers —
and you, will you call it a
theft? —
My baby, the bones that had suck'd
me, the bones that had laughed
and had cried —
Theirs? O no! they are mine — not
theirs — they had moved in my
side.

xlii.

Do you think I was scared by the
bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried
'em all —
I can't dig deep, I am old — in the
night by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'll rise up whole when the
trumpet of judgment 'll sound,
But I charge you never to say that I
laid him in holy ground.

xliii.

They would scratch him up — they
would hang him again on the
cursed tree.
Sin? O yes — we are sinners, I know
— let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the
Lord's good will toward men —
"Full of compassion and mercy, the
Lord" — let me hear it again;
"Full of compassion and mercy —
long-suffering." Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder
— the Saviour lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except
for the worst of the worst,
And the first may be last — I have
heard it in church — and the
last may be first.
Suffering — O long-suffering — yes, as
the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the
wind and the shower and the
snow.

xiv.

Heard, have you? what? they have
told you he never repented his
sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his
mother? are *you* of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when
the storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'll wail like a child and
the sea that 'll moan like a
man?

xv.

Election, Election and Reprobation —
it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I
shall not find him in Hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that
the Lord has look'd into my
care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy
with Willy, I know not where.

xvi.

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul,
that is all your desire:
Do you think that I care for *my* soul
if my boy be gone to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark — go,
go, you may leave me alone —
You never have borne a child — you
are just as hard as a stone.

xvii.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think
that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my
Willy's voice in the wind —
The snow and the sky so bright — he
used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the
church and not from the gibbet
— for hark!
Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is
coming — shaking the walls —
Willy — the moon's in a cloud —
Good night. I am going. H
calls.

THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

I.

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou mun a' sights¹ to tell.
 Eh, but I be maän glad to seeß tha sa 'arty an' well.
 " Cast awaäß an' a dissolut land wi' a vartical soon²!"
 Strange fur to goä fur to think what saäilors a' seäan an' a' doon;
 " Summat to drink — sa' ot?" I'a nowt but Adam's wine:
 What's the eät o' this little 'ill-side to the eät o' the line?

II.

" What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?" I'll tell tha. Gin.
 But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä fur it down to the inn.
 Naay — fur I be maän-glad, but thaw tha was iver sa dry,
 Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer, an' I'll tell tha why.

III.

Meü an' thy sister was married, when wur it? back-end o' June,
 Ten year sin', and wa'greed as well as a fiddle i' tune:
 I could fettle and clump owl boöots and shoes wi' the best on'em all,
 As fur as fro' Thursby thurn hup to Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.
 We was busy as beeäis i' the bloom an' as 'appy as 'art could think,
 An' then the babby wur burn, and then I taäkes to the drink.

¹ The vowels *aï*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *craïin'*, *daïtin'*, *whaï*, *ai* (*I*), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

² The *oo* short, as in " wood."

IV.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäly it, my lad, thaw I be hafe shaämed on it now,
 We could sing a good song at the Plow, we could sing a good song at the Plow;
 Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an' hurted my huck,
 An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes släape down i' the squad an' the muck:
 An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilor — not hafe ov a man, my lad — Fur he scräwm'd an' seraited my faïce like a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa mad
 That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,³ an' raäited ma, ' Sottin' thy braäins Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an' hawmin'⁴ about i' the laänes, Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn't touch thy 'at to the Squire;
 An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noïse an' I seeäd 'im a-gitten' o' fire; But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hal-lus as droonk as a king, Foällks' coostom flitted awaäß like a kite wi' a brokken string.

V.

An' Sally she wesh'd foällks' cloths to keep the wolf fro' the door, Eh but the moor she riled me, she druv me to drink the moor, Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd, wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur 'id, An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and I weärd it o' liquor, I did.

VI.

An' one night I cooms 'ofm like a bull gotten loose at a faäir, An' she wur a-waälting' fo'mma, an' eryin' and teärin' 'er 'naïr, An' I tumbled athurt the craäidle an' sweäär'd as I'd break ivry stick

¹ Hip.

² Seold.

³ Lounging.

O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied
our Sally a kick,
An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs,
an' she an' the babby beäl'd,
Fur I knew'd naw moor what I did
nor a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

VII.

An' when I waäkéd i' the murnin' I
seääd that our Sally went
laäimed
Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur
dreäeful ashäämed;
An' Sally wur sloomy² an' draggle
taäil'd in an owd turn gown,
An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd
and the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

VIII.

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty
an' neät an' sweäet,
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower
fro' 'eäld to feeäät:
An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied
'er by Thursby thurn;
Theer wur a lark a-singin' is best of
a Sunday at murn,
Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-
mountain' oop 'igher an' 'igher,
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e
shined like a sparkle o' fire.
"Doesn't tha see 'im," she axes, "fur
I can see 'im?" an' I
Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as
danced in 'er pratty blue eye;
An' I says "I mun gie tha a kiss," an'
Sally says "Noä, thou moäint,"
But I gied'er a kiss, an' then anoother,
an' Sally says "doäint!"

IX.

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at
fust she wur all in a tew,
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn togither
like birds on a beugh;
An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire
an' the loove o' God fur men,
An' then upo' coomin' awäy Sally
gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

¹ Bellowed, cried out.² Sluggish, out of spirits.

X.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick
like Saätan as fell
Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire — thaw
theer's naw drinkin' i' Hell;
Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the
wolf fro' the door,
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er
as well as afoor.

XL.

Sa like a graäit num-campus I blub-
ber'd awaäy o' the bed —
"Weänt niver do it naw moor;"
an' Sally looökt up an' she said,
"I'll upowd it ' tha weänt; thou'rt
like the rest o' the men,
Thou'll goä snifflin' about the tap till
tha does it agäan.
Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I
knows, as knows tha sa well,
That, if tha sees 'im an' smells 'im
tha'll foller 'im slick into Hell."

XII.

"Naäy," says I, "fur I weänt goä
snifflin' about the tap."
"Weänt tha?" she says, an' mysen I
thowt i' mysen "mayhap."
"Noä;" an' I started awaäy like a
shot, an' down to the Hinn,
An' I browt what tha sees stannin'
theer, yon big black bottle o'
gin.

XIII.

"That caps owt,"² says Sally, an' saw
she begins to cry,
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands 'an I says
to 'er, "Sally," says I,
"Stan' im theer i' the naäme-o' the
Lord an' the power ov 'is
Graäce,
Stan' im theer, fur I'll looök my
hennemy strait i' the faäce,
Stan' im theer i' the winder, an' let
ma looök at 'im then,
'E sees naw moor nor watter, an'
'e's the Devil's oän sen."

¹ I'll uphold it.² That's beyond everything.

XIV.

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't
do naw work an' all,
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an'
poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'
sattled 'ersen o' my knee,
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till
ageän I feel'd mysen free.

XV.

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk
stood a-gawmin¹ in,
As thaw it wur, summat bewitch'd
instead of a quart o' gin;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—
an' I wur chousin' the wife,
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur
it nobbut to salve my life;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick
ov' is arm, an' 'e shaws it to me,
"Feeäl thou this! thou can't graw
this upo' watter!" says he.
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just
as candles was lit,
"Thou moänt do it," he says, "tha
mun breäk 'im off bit by bit."
"Thou'rt but a Methody-man," says
Parson, and laäys down is 'at,
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, "but
I respects tha fur that;"
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks
down fro' the 'All to see,
An' 'e spansks 'is 'and into mine, "fur
I respects tha," says 'e;
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a
wind fro' far an' wide,
And browt me the booöts to be cob-
bled fro' hafe the countryside.

XVI.

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall
stan to my dying daäy;
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in
anoother kind of a waäy,
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I
keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts
'im, an' puts 'im back i' the light.

¹ Staring vacantly.

XVII.

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a
quart? Naw doubt:
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi'
an' fowt it out.
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I
cared to taäste,
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur
I'd feäl mysen cleän dis-
graäced.

XVIII.

An' once I said to the Missis, "My
lass, when I cooms to die,
Smash the bottle to smithers, thè
Devil's in 'im," said I.
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if
Sally be left aloän,
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke
'im afoor the Throän.

XIX.

Coom thou 'eer — you laädy a-steppin'
along the streeät,
Doesn't tha knaw 'er — sa pratty, an'
feät, an' neüt, an' sweetit?
Look at the cloäths on 'er back,
thebbe ammost spick-span-new,
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a
codlin wesh'd i' the dew.

XX.

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we
be a-goin to dine,
Bafcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-pud-
din¹ an' Adam's wine;
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun
goä fur it down to the Hinn,
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood,
noä, not fur Sally's oän kin.

THE REVENGE.

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

I.

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard
Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird,
came flying from far away:

¹ A pudding made with the first milk of the cow after calving.

"Spanish ships of war at sea! we
have sighted fifty-three!"
Then swore Lord Thomas Howard:
"Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my
ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I
must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we
fight with fifty-three?"

II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I
know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight
with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that
are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I
left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the
devildoms of Spain."

III.

So Lord Howard past away with five
ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the
silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his
sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down
below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that
they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for
the glory of the Lord.

IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to
work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till
the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving
upon the weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!"

There'll be little of us left by the
time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be
all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the
children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon
Don or devil yet."

V.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and
we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into
the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck,
and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right
and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro'
the long sea-lane between.

VI.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd
down from their decks and
laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made
mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip
that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with
her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and
we stay'd.

VII.

And while now the great San Philip
hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two
upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from
them all.

VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she be-
thought herself and went
Having that within her womb that
had left her ill content;

And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX.

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more —
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before ?

X.

For he said "Fight on ! fight on !" Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck ; And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone, With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck, But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead, And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head, And he said "Fight on ! fight on !"

XI.

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea, And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring ; But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,

So they watch'd what the end would be, And we had not fought them in vain, But in perilous plight were we, Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain, And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife ; And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold, And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent ; And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side ; But Sir Richard cried in his English pride, " We have fought such a fight for a day and a night As may never be fought again ! We have won great glory, my men ! And a day less or more At sea or ashore, We die — does it matter when ? Sink me the ship, Master Gunner — sink her, split her in twain ! Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain ! "

XII.

And the gunner said " Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply : " We have children, we have wives, And the Lord hath spared our lives. We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go ; We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow." And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then, Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last, And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace ; But he rose upon their decks, and he cried :

"I have fought for Queen and Faith
like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is
bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard
Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he
died.

XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had
been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory
of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship
and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil
for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor
down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a
swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and
long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had
ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the
weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a
great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is
raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their
sails and their masts and their
flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on
theshot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went
down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

THE SISTERS.

THEY have left the doors ajar; and
by their clash,
And prelude on the keys, I know the
song.
Their favorite — which I call "The
Tables Turned."
Evelyn begins it "O diviner Air."

EVELYN.

O diviner Air,
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust,
the glare,
Far from out the west in shadowing
showers,
Over all the meadow baked and bare,
Making fresh and fair
All the bowers and the flowers,
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,
Over all this weary world of ours,
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that — you scarce could
better that.
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

EDITH.

O diviner light,
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon
with night,
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding
showers,
Far from out a sky for ever bright,
Overall the woodland's flooded bowers,
Over all the meadow's drowning flow-
ers,
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices — and
themselves!
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the
other,
As one is somewhat graver than the
other —
Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle,
whom
You count the father of your fortune,
longs
For this alliance: let me ask you then,
Which voice most takes you? for I
do not doubt
Being a watchful parent, you are
taken
With one or other: tho' sometimes I
fear
You may be flickering, fluttering in a
doubt
Between the two — which must not be
— which might

Be death to one : they both are beautiful :

Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says
The common voice, if one may trust
it : she ?

No ! but the paler and the graver,
Edith.

Woo her and gain her then : no
wavering, boy !

The graver is perhaps the one for you
Who jest and laugh so easily and so
well.

For love will go by contrast, as by
likes.

No sisters ever prized each other
more.

Not so : their mother and her sister
loved

More passionately still.

But that my best

And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes
it,

And that I know you worthy every-
way

To be my son, I might, perchance, be
loath

To part them, or part from them : and
yet one

Should marry, or all the broad lands
in your view

From this bay window — which our
house has held

Three hundred years — will pass col-
laterally.

My father with a child on either
knee,

A hand upon the head of either child,
Smoothing their locks, as golden as
his own

Were silver, "get them wedded"
would he say,

And once my prattling Edith ask'd
him "why ?"

Ay, why ? said he, "for why should I
go lame ?"

Then told them of his wars, and of
his wound.

For see — this wine — the grape from
whence it flow'd

Was blackening on the slopes of
Portugal,

When that brave soldier, down the
terrible ridge

Plunged in the last fierce charge at
Waterloo,

And caught the laming bullet. He
left me this,

Which yet retains a memory of its
youth,

As I of mine, and my first passion.
Come !

Here's to your happy union with my
child !

Yet must you change your name :
no fault of mine !

You say that you can do it as willingly
As birds make ready for their bridal-
time

By change of feather : for all that,
my boy,

Some birds are sick and sullen when
they moult.

An old and worthy name ! but mine
that stirr'd

Among our civil wars and earlier too
Among the Roses, the more venerable.

I care not for a name — no fault of
mine.

Once more — a happier marriage than
my own !

You see yon Lombard poplar on the
plain.

The highway running by it leaves a
breadth

Ofward to left and right, where, long
ago,

One bright May morning in a world
of song,

I lay at leisure, watching overhead
The aerial poplar wave, an ambo-
spire.

I dozed ; I woke. An open landau-
let

Whirl'd by, which, after it had past
me, show'd

Turning my way, the loveliest face
on earth.

The face of one there sitting opposite.
On whom I brought a strange unhap-
piness,

That time I did not see.

Love at first sight
 May seem — with goodly rhyme and
 reason for it —
 Possible — at first glimpse, and for a
 face
 Gone in a moment — strange. Yet
 once, when first
 I came on lake Llanberis in the dark,
 A moonless night with storm — one
 lightning-fork
 Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I
 loiter'd there
 The full day after, yet in retrospect
 That less than momentary thunder-
 sketch
 Of lake and mountain conquers all
 the day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face
 for me.
 Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as
 well.
 For look you here — the shadows are
 too deep,
 And like the critic's blurring comment
 make
 The veriest beauties of the work
 appear
 The darkest faults: the sweet eyes
 frown: the lips
 Seem but a gash. My sole memorial
 Of Edith — no, the other, — both
 indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro'
 sense and soul
 And by the poplar vanish'd — to be
 found
 Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the
 tall
 Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping
 beechen boughs
 Of our New Forest. I was there
 alone:
 The phantom of the whirling landau-
 let
 For ever past me by: when one quick
 peal
 Of laughter drew me thro' the glim-
 mering glades
 Down to the snowlike sparkle of a
 cloth

On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face
 again,
 My Rosalind in this Arden — Edith
 — all
 One bloom of youth, health, beauty,
 happiness,
 And moved to merriment at a passing
 jest.

There one of those about her know-
 ing me
 Call'd me to join them; so with these
 I spent
 What seem'd my crowning hour, my
 day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccess-
 fully,
 The worse for her, for me! was I con-
 tent?
 Ay — no, not quite; for now and then
 I thought
 Laziness, vague love-longings, the
 bright May,
 Had made a heated haze to magnify
 The charm of Edith — that a man's
 ideal
 Is high in Heaven, and lodged with
 Plato's God,
 Not findable here — content, and not
 content,
 In some such fashion as a man may
 be
 That having had the portrait of his
 friend
 Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and
 says,
 "Good! very like! not altogether he."

As yet I had not bound myself by
 words,
 Only, believing I loved Edith, made
 Edith love me. Then came the day
 when I,
 Flattering myself that all my doubts
 were fools
 Born of the fool this Age that doubts
 of all —
 Not I that day of Edith's love or
 mine —
 Had braced my purpose to declare
 myself:

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.
The golden gates would open at a word.
I spoke it — told her of my passion, seen
And lost and found again, had got so far,
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell — I heard
Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the doors —
On a sudden after two Italian years
Had set the blossom of her health again,
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd — there,
There was the face, and altogether she.
The mother fell about the daughter's neck,
The sisters closed in one another's arms,
Their people throng'd about them from the hall,
And in the thick of question and reply
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;
I could not free myself in honor — bound
Not by the sounded letter of the word,
But counterpressures of the yielded hand
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her eyes
Upon me when she thought I did not see —
Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but could I wed her
Loving the other? do her that great wrong?
Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-morn?
Had I not known where Love, at first a fear,
Grew after marriage to full height and form?

Yet after marriage, that mock-sister there —
Brother-in-law — the fiery nearness of it —
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood —
What end but darkness could ensue from this
For all the three? So Love and Honor jarr'd
Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise the full
High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up and down
Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:
"My mother bids me ask" (I did not tell you —
A widow with less guile than many a child.
God help the wrinkled children that are Christ's
As well as the plump cheek — she wrought us harm,
Poor soul, not knowing) "are you ill?" (so ran
The letter) "you have not been here of late.
You will not find me here. At last I go
On that long-promised visit to the North.
I told your wayside story to my mother
And Evelyn. She remembers you. Farewell.
Pray come and see my mother. Almost blind
With ever-growing cataract, yet she thinks
She sees you when she hears. Again farewell."

Cold words from one I had hoped to warm so far
That I could stamp my image on her heart!
"Pray come and see my mother, and farewell."
Cold, but as welcome as free airs of heaven
After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish, strange!

What dwarfs are men! my strangled vanity
 Utter'd a stifled cry—to have vext myself
 And all in vain for her—cold heart or none—
 No bride for me. Yet so my path was clear
 To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.
 For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,
 Because the simple mother work'd upon By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.
 And Edith would be bridesmaid on the day.
 But on that day, not being all at ease,
 I from the altar glancing back upon her,
 Before the first "I will" was utter'd, saw
 The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, passionless—
 "No harm, no harm" I turn'd again, and placed
 My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no word,
 She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn clung
 In utter silence for so long, I thought
 "What, will she never set her sister free?"

We left her, happy each in each, and then,
 As tho' the happiness of each in each Were not enough, must fain have torrents, lakes,
 Hills, the great things of Nature and the fair,
 To lift us as it were from common-place,
 And help us to our joy. Better have sent
 Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,
 To change with her horizon, if true Love
 Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would not live
 Save that I think this gross hard-seeming world
 Is our misshaping vision of the Powers Behind the world, that make our griefs our gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-day
 The great Tragedian, that had quench'd herself
 In that assumption of the bridesmaid — she
 That loved me — our true Edith — her brain broke
 With over-acting, till she rose and fled
 Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn rain
 To the deaf church — to be let in — to pray
 Before that altar — so I think; and there
 They found her beating the hard Protestant doors.
 She died and she was buried ere we knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak.
 At once
 The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that had sunn'd
 The morning of our marriage, past away:
 And on our home-return the daily want
 Of Edith in the house, the garden, still
 Haunted us like her ghost; and by and by,
 Either from that necessity for talk Which lives with blindness, or plain innocence
 Of nature, or desire that her lost child
 Should earn from both the praise of heroism,
 The mother broke her promise to the dead,
 And told the living daughter with what love

Edith had welcomed my brief wooing
of her,
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and
death.

Henceforth that mystic bond be-
twixt the twins —
Did I not tell you they were twins ?
— prevail'd
So far that no caress could win my
wife
Back to that passionate answer of full
heart
I had from her at first. Not that her
love,
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power
of love,
Had lessen'd, but the mother's gar-
rulous wail
For ever woke the unhappy Past
again,
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to
be my bride,
Put forth cold hands between us, and
I fear'd
The very fountains of her life were
chill'd;
So took her thence, and brought her
here, and here
She bore a child, whom reverently we
call'd
Edith; and in the second year was
born
A second — this I named from her
own self,
Evelyn; then two weeks — no more
— she joined,
In and beyond the grave, that one
she loved.
Now in this quiet of declining life,
Thro' dreams by night and trances of
the day,
The sisters glide about me hand in
hand,
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell
One from the other, no, nor care to tell
One from the other, only know they
come,
They smile upon me, till, remembering
all
The love they both have borne me,
and the love

I bore them both — divided as I am
From either by the stillness of the
grave —

I know not which of these I love the
best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own
true eyes
Are traitors to her; our quick Evelyn —
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they
talk,
And not without good reason, my
good son —
Is yet untouch'd: and I that hold
them both
Dearest of all things — well, I am not
sure —
But if there lie a preference either way,
And in the rich vocabulary of Love
“Most dearest” be a true superla-
tive —

I think *I* likewise love your Edith
most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL.¹

L.

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur
New Squire coom'd last night.
Butter an' heggs — yis — yis. I'll
goil wi' tha back: all right;
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-
rants the heggs be as well,
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya
breaks the shell.

II.

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hey a glass
o' cowslip wine!
I liked the owd Squire an' is gells as
thaw they was gells o' mine,
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire
an' is darters an' me,
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I
niver not took to she:
But Nelly, the last of the cletch² I
liked 'er the fust on 'em all,

¹ See note to “Northern Cobbler.”

² A brood of chickens.

Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es
died o' the fever at fall:
An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord,
but Miss Annie she said it wur
draäins,
Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an'
arn'd naw thanks fur'er paäins.
Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my chilider,
I han't gotten none!
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' is taäil in
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone.

III.

Fur 'staälte be i' taäil, my lass: tha
dosn' know what that be?
But I knaws the law, I does, for the
lawyer ha towd it me.
"When theer's naw 'edid to a 'Ouse by
the fault o' that ere maäle—
The gells they counts fur nowt, and
the next un he taäkes the taäil."

IV.

What be the next un like? can tha
tell ony harm on 'im lass?—
Naay sit down — naw 'urry — sa
cowl! — hey another glass!
Straänge an' cowl fur the time! we
may happen a fall o' snaw—
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm,
but I likes to know.
An' I 'oops es 'e beänt boooklarn'd:
but 'e dosn' not coom fro' the
shere;
We' anew o' that wi' the Squire, an'
we haätes boooklarn' ere.

V.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an'
niver lookt arter the land—
Whoäts or turimuts or taältes — e' ed
hallus a booök i' 'is 'and,
Hallus aloïn wi' is booöks, thaw nigh
upo' seventy year.
An' booöks, what's booöks? thou
knaws thebbe neyther 'ere nor
theer.

VI.

An' the gells, they hadn't naw taäils,
an' the lawyer he towd it me

That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he
couldn't cut down a tree!
"Drat the trees," says I, to be sewer I
haältes 'em, my lass,
Fur we puts the muck o' the land an'
they sucks the muck fro' the
grass.

VII.

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an'
gied to the tramps goin' by—
An' all o' the wust i' the parish — wi'
hoffens a drop in 'is eye.
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her
awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,
An' they rampaged about wi' their
grooms, an' was 'untin' arter
the men,
An' hallus a-dallackt¹ an' dizend out,
an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,
While 'e sit like a graät glimmer-
gowk² wi' is glasses athurt 'is
noäse,
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff as it
couldn't be scroob'd awaäy,
Fur atween 'is reäldin' an' writin' 'e
snifft up a box in a dally,
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor
arter the birds wi' 'is gun,
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e
leäved it to Charlie 'is son,
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds,
but Charlie 'e etch'd the pike,
For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an'
'e didn't take kind to it like;
But I feärs es 'e'd gie fur a howry³ owd
book thutty pound an' moor,
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn
sen, sa I knew'd es 'e'd coom
to be poor;
An' 'e gied—I be fear'd to tell tha'ow
much—fur an owd scratted
stoän,
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land
an' 'e got a brown pot an' a
boän,
An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't
gold, wi' good gowd o' the
Queen,

¹ Overdressed in gay colors.² Owl.³ Filthy.

An' e bowt little statutes all-naäkt
an' which was a shaame to be
seen;
But e niver looökt ower a bill, nor e
niver not seed to owt,
An' e niver knawd nowt but booöks,
an' booöks, as thou knows,
beänt nowt.

VIII.

But owd Squire's laddie es long es she
lived she kep' em all clear,
Thaw es long es she lived I never hed
none of 'er darters 'ere;
But arter she died we was all es one,
the childer an' me,
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an'
offens we hed 'em to tea.
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses
'ud talk o' their Missis's wäillys,
An' the Missisis talk'd o' the lasses.—
I'll tell tha some o' these daïlys.
Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck
oop, like 'er mother afoor—
'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver
derken'd my door.

IX.

An' Squire e smiled an' e smiled till
'e'd gotten a fright at last,
An' e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's
letters they foller'd sa fast;
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son,
an' e says to 'im, meek as a
mouse,
"Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or
the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,
Fur I finds es I be that I debt, es I
'olps es thou'll 'elp me a bit,
An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil
I may saäve mysen yit."

X.

But Charlie e sets back 'is ears, 'an' e
sweärs, an' e says to im " Noä.
I've gotten the 'staüte by the taäil an'
be dang'd if I iver let goä!
Coom! cooin! feyther," e says, "why
shouldn't thy booöks be sowl?
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe
worth their weight i' gowd."

XI.

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd
'em, belong'd to the Squire,
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leaves i'
the middle to kindle the fire;
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd
nigh to nowt at the saille,
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to
git 'im to cut off 'is taäil.

XII.

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes — 'e
were that outdaicious at oälm,
Not thaw ya went fur to raäike out Hell
wi' a small-tooth coämb—
Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an'
droonk wi' the farmer's äale,
Mad wi' the lasses an' all — an' 'e
wouldn't cut off the taäil.

XIII.

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and
a thurn be a-grawin' theer,
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the
Maäy es I see'd it to-year—
Theerabouts Charlie joomp — and it
gied me a scare iother night,
Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i'
the derk, fur it looëkt sa white.
"Billy," says 'e, "hey a joomp!"—
thaw the banks o' the beck be
sa high,
Fur he en'd is 'erse Billy-rough-un,
thaw niver a hair wur awry;
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'
Charlie e brok 'is neck,
Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur
'e lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

XIV.

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur
gone an' 'is boy wur deäd,
An' Squire e smiled an' e smiled, but
'e niver not lift oop 'is 'ääd:
Hallus a soft un Squire! an' e smiled,
fur 'e hedn't naw friend,
Sa feyther an' son was buried togither,
an' this wur the hend.

XV.

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the
mooney, but hes the pride,

'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o'
the tother side;
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord,
howsiver they präy'd an'
präy'd,
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves
their debts to be paäid.
Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo'
poor owd Squire i' the wood,
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur
they weant niver coom to naw
good.

XVI.

Fur Molly the long un she walkt
awaäly wi' a hofficer lad,
An' nawbody 'card on 'er·sin, sa o'
coorse she be gone to the bad!
An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-
arts she niver 'ed none—
Straänge an' unheppen¹ Miss Lucy!
we naämed her "Dot an' gaw
one!"
An' Hetty wur weak i' the hatties,
wi'out ony harm i' the legs;
An' the fever 'ed baäkfed Jinny's 'ead
as bald as one o' them heggs,
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craäidle as
big i' the mouth as a cow,
An' saw she man hammergrate,² lass,
or she weänt git a maälte ony-
how!
An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me
afoor my awn foällks to my
faäce
"A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev
to be larn'd her awn plaäice,"
Hes for Miss Hannie the heldest hes
now be a grawin sa howd,
I knowds that mooth o' shëd, es it beänt
not fit to be towd!

XVII.

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd
Miss Annie to saäly
Es I should be talkin ageän 'em, es
soon es they went awaäly,
Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they
went, an' our Nelly she gied me
'er 'and,

¹ Ungainly, awkward. ² Emigrate.

Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an'
'is gells es belong'd to the land;
Boöks, es I said afoor, thebbe ney-
ther 'ere nor theer!
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs
fur huppuds o' twenty year.

XVIII.

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd,
sa I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,
An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an'
they knaw'd what a hegg wur
au' all;
Hugger-mugger they lived, but they
wasn't that eäsy to pleäse,
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they
laäid big heggs es tha seesas;
An' I niver puts saäme¹ i' my butter,
they does it at Willis's farm,
Taäste another drop o' the wine—
twelänt do tha na harm.

XIX.

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone;
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter
my nightcap wur on;
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he
coom'd last night sa laäte—
Pluksh!!!² the hens i' the pens! why
didn't tha hesp tha gaäte?

IN THE CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL.

EMMIE.

I.

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I
never had seen him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when
I saw him come in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of
France and of other lands—
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest,
big merciless hands!
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes,
but they said too of him

¹ Lard.

² A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands
to scare trespassing fowl.

He was happier using the knife than
in trying to save the limb,
And that I can well believe, for he
look'd so coarse and so red,
I could think he was one of those who
would break their jests on the
dead,
And mangle the living dog that had
loved him and fawn'd at his
knee —
Drench'd with the hellish oorali — that
ever such things should be!

II.

Here was a boy — I am sure that some
of our children would die
But for the voice of Love, and the
smile, and the comforting eye —
Here was a boy in the ward, every
bone seem'd out of its place —
Caught in a mill and crush'd — it was
all but a hopeless case;
And he handled him gently enough;
but his voice and his face were
not kind,
And it was but a hopeless case, he
had seen it and made up his
mind,
And he said to me roughly "The lad
will need little more of your
care."
"All the more need," I told him, "to
seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;
They are all his children here, and I
pray for them all as my own;"
But he turn'd to me, "Ay, good woman,
can prayer set a broken bone?"
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but
I know that I heard him say
"All very well — but the good Lord
Jesus has had his day."

III.

Had? has it come? It has only
dawn'd. It will come by and
by.
O how could I serve in the wards if the
hope of the world were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and
the loathsome smells of disease
But that He said "Ye do it to me,
when ye do it to these"?

IV.

So he went. And we past to this
ward where the younger chil-
dren are laid:
Here is the cot of our orphan, our dar-
ling, our meek little maid;
Empty you see just now! We have
lost her who loved her so
much —
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sen-
sitive plant to the touch;
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often
moved me to tears,
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have
found in a child of her years —
Nay you remember our Emmie; you
used to send her the flowers;
How she would smile at 'em, play
with 'em, talk to 'em hours
after hours!
They that can wander at will where the
works of the Lord are reveal'd
Little guess what joy can be got from
a cowslip out of the fields;
Flowers to these "spirits in prison"
are all they can know of the
spring,
They freshen and sweeten the wards
like the waft of an Angel's
wing;
And she lay with a flower in one hand
and her thin hands crost on her
breast —
Wan, but as pretty as heart can de-
sire, and we thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping — so quiet, our doc-
tor said "Poor little dear,
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll
never live thro' it, I fear."

V.

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as
far as the head of the stair,
Then I return'd to the ward; the child
didn't see I was there.

VI.

Never since I was nurse, had I been
so grieved and so vext!
Emunie had heard him. Softly she
call'd from her cot to the next,

"He says I shall never live thro' it, O
Annie, what shall I do?"
Annie consider'd. "If I," said the wise little Annie, "was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help me, for, Emmie, you see,
It's all in the picture there; 'Little children should come to me.'"
(Meaning the print that you gave us,
I find that it always can please
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with children about his knees.)
"Yes, and I will," said Emmie, "but then if I call to the Lord,
How should he know that it's me? such a lot of beds in the ward!"
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she consider'd and said:
"Emmie, you put out your arms, and you leave 'em outside on the bed—
The Lord has so much to see to! but, Emmie, you tell it him plain,
It's the little girl with her arms lying out on the counterpane."

VII.

I had sat three nights by the child—I could not watch her for four—
My brain had begun to reel—I felt I could do it no more.
That was my sleeping-night, but I thought that it never would pass.
There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter of hail on the glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I heard as I tost about,
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the storm and the darkness without;
My sleep was broken beside with dreams of the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie who scarce would escape with her life;
Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd she stood by me and smiled,
And the doctor came at his hour, and we went to see to the child.

VIII.

He had brought his ghastly tools: we believed her asleep again—
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out on the counterpane,
Say that His day is done! Ah why should we care what they say?
The Lord of the children had heard her, and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that, which lived True life, live on—and if the fatal kiss, Born of true life and love, divorce thee not From earthly love and life—if what we call The spirit flash not all at once from out This shadow into Substance—then perhaps The mellow'd murmur of the people's praise From thine own State, and all our breadth of realm, Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds in light, Ascends to thee; and this March morn that sees Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy grave, And thine Imperial mother smile again, May send one ray to thee! and who can tell— Thou—England's England-loving daughter—thou Dying so English thou wouldest have her flag Borne on thy coffin—where is he can swear But that some broken gleam from our poor earth May touch thee, while remembering thee, I lay

At thy pale feet this ballad of the
deeds
Of England, and her banner in the
East !

THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW.

I.

BANNER of England, not for a season,
O banner of Britain, hast thou
Floated in conquering battle or flapt
to the battle-cry !
Never with mightier glory than when
we had rear'd thee on high
Flying at top of the roofs in the
ghastly siege of Lucknow —
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard,
but ever we raised thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew.

II.

Frail were the works that defended
the hold that we held with our
lives —

Women and children among us, God
help them, our children and
wives !

Hold it we might — and for fifteen
days or for twenty at most.
“ Never surrender, I charge you, but
every man die at his post ! ”

Voice of the dead whom we loved,
our Lawrence the best of the
brave :

Cold were his brows when we kiss'd
him — we laid him that night
in his grave.

“ Every man die at his post ! ” and
there hail'd on our houses and
halls

Death from their rifle-bullets, and
death from their cannon-balls,
Death in our innermost chamber, and
death at our slight barricade,
Death while we stood with the mus-
ket, and death while we stoopt
to the spade,

Death to the dying, and wounds to
the wounded, for often there
fell,

Striking the hospital wall, crashing
thro' it, their shot and their
shell,

Death — for their spies were among
us, their marksmen were told
of our best,
So that the brute bullet broke thro'
the brain that could think for
the rest ;

Bullets would sing by our foreheads,
and bullets would rain at our
feet —

Fire from ten thousand at once of the
rebels that girdled us round —
Death at the glimpse of a finger from
over the breadth of a street,
Death from the heights of the mosque
and the palace, and death in
ground !

Mine ? yes, a mine ! Countermine !
down, down ! and creep thro'
the hole !

Keep the revolver in hand ! you can
hear him — the murdererous mole !
Quiet, ah ! quiet — wait till the point
of the pickaxe be thro' !
Click with the pick, coming nearer
and nearer again than before —
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the
dark pioneer is no more ;
And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew !

III.

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many
times, and it chanced on a day
Soon as the blast of that underground
thunderclap echo'd away,
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur
like so many fiends in their
hell —

Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on
volley, and yell upon yell —
Fiercely on all the defences our myr-
iad enemy fell.

What have they done ? where is it ?
Out yonder. Guard the Redan !
Storm at the Water-gate ! storm at the
Bailey-gate ! storm, and it ran
Surging and swaying all round us, as
ocean on every side

Plunges and heaves at a bank that is
daily drown'd by the tide—
So many thousands that if they be bold
enough, who shall escape?
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall
know we are soldiers and men!
Ready! take aim at their leaders—
their masses are gapp'd with
our grape—
Backward they reel like the wave, like
the wave flinging forward again,
Flying and foil'd at the last by the
handful they could not subdue;
And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew.

IV.

Handful of men as we were, we were
English in heart and in limb,
Strong with the strength of the race
to command, to obey, to endure,
Each of us fought as if hope for the
garrison hung but on him;
Still—could we watch at all points?
we were every day fewer and
fewer.

There was a whisper among us, but
only a whisper that past:
“Children and wives—if the tigers
leap into the fold unawares—
Every man die at his post—and the
foe may outlive us at last—
Better to fall by the hands that they
love, than to fall into theirs!”
Roar upon roar in a moment two
mines by the enemy sprung
Clove into perilous chasins our walls
and our poor palisades.
Rifleman, true is your heart, but be
sure that your hand be as true!
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed
are your flank fusillades—
Twice do we hurl them to earth from
the ladders to which they had
clung,
Twice from the ditch where they shel-
ter we drive them with hand-
grenades;
And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew.

V.

Then on another wild morning another
wild earthquake out-tore
Clean from our lines of defence ten or
twelve good paces or more.
Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden
there from the light of the
sun—

One has leapt up on the beach, crying
out: “Follow me, follow me!”—
Mark him—he falls! then another,
and him too, and down goes he.
Had they been bold enough then, who
can tell but the traitors had
won?

Boardings and rafters and doors—an
embrasure! make way for the
gun!

Now double-charge it with grape! It
is charged and we fire, and they
run.

Praise to our Indian brothers, and let
the dark face have his due!
Thanks to the kindly dark faces who
fought with us, faithful and few,
Fought with the bravest among us,
and drove them, and smote
them, and slew,
That ever upon the topmost roof our
banner in India blew.

VI.

Men will forget what we suffer and
not what we do. We can fight!
But to be soldier all day and be senti-
nel all thro' the night—
Ever the mine and assault, our sallies,
their lying alarms,
Bugles and drums in the darkness, and
shoutings and soundings to
arms,
Ever the labor of fifty that had to be
done by five,
Ever the marvel among us that one
should be left alive,
Ever the day with its traitorous death
from the loopholes around,
Ever the night with its coffinless
corpse to be laid in the ground,
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a
deluge of cataract skies,

Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,
 Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,
 Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that could not be heal'd,
 Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife,—
 Torture and trouble in vain,— for it never could save us a life.
 Valor of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,
 Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,
 Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,
 Toil and inefstable weariness, faltering hopes of relief,
 Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew—
 Then day and night, day and night, coming down on the still-shatter'd walls
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls—
 But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

VII.

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by the scout,
 Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?
 Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!
 All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,
 Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers,
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of, the Highlander wet with their tears!
 Dance to the pibroch! — saved! we are saved! — is it you? is it you?
 Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing of Heaven!
 “ Hold it for fifteen days!” we have held it for eighty-seven!

And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM.

(IN WALES.)

My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout
 To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow—

I read no more the prisoner's mute wail Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;

I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,

For I am emptier than a friar's brains;
 But God is with me in this wilderness, These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms—

And God's free air, and hope of better things.

I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,

Not now—I hope to do it—some scatter'd ears,

Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales—

But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wag'd

They said with such heretical arrogance

Against the proud archbishop Arundel—

So much God's cause was fluent in it—is here

But as a Latin Bible to the crowd; “Bara!” — what use? The Shepherd, when I speak,

Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard “Dim Saeneg” passes, wroth at things of old—

No fault of mine. Had he God's word in Welsh

He might be kindlier: happily come the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem

In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,
Least, for in thee the word was born
again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living
word,
Who whilome spakest to the South in
Greek

About the soft Mediterranean shores,
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
As good need was — thou hast come
to talk our isle.

Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to use the tongues of all
the world.

Yet art thou thine own witness that
thou bringest

Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,
My frightened Wiclif-preacher whom I
erost

In flying hither? that one night a
crowd

Throng'd the waste field about the
city gates:

The king was on them suddenly with
a host.

Why there? they came to hear their
preacher. Then

Some cried on Cobham, on the good
Lord Cobham;

Ay, for they love me! but the king —
nor voice

Nor finger raised against him — took
and hang'd,

Took, hang'd and burnt — how many
— thirty-nine —

Call'd it rebellion — hang'd, poor
friends, as rebels

And burn'd alive as heretics! for
your Priest

Labels — to take the king along with
him —

All heresy, treason: but to call men
traitors

May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,
Red in thy birth, redder with house-
hold war,
Now reddest with the blood of holy
men,

Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster —
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor
sang

Fluttering the hawks of this crown-
lusting line —

By firth and loch thy silver sister
grow,¹

That were my rose, there my allegi-
ance due.

Self-starved, they say — nay, mur-
der'd, doubtless dead.

So to this king I cleaved: my friend
was he,

Once my fast friend: I would have
given my life

To help his own from scathe, a thou-
sand lives

To save his soul. He might have
come to learn

Our Wiclif's learning: but the worldly
Priests

Who fear the king's hard common-
sense should find

What rotten piles uphold their mason-
work,

Urge him to foreign war. O had he
will'd

I might have stricken a lusty stroke
for him,

But he would not; far liever led my
friend

Back to the pure and universal
church,

But he would not: whether that heir-
less flaw

In his throne's title make him feel so
frail,

He leans on Antichrist; or that his
mind,

So quick, so capable in soldiership,
In matters of the faith, alas the while!
More worth than all the kingdoms of
this world,

Runs in the rut, a coward to the
Priest.

Burnt — good Sir Roger Acton, my
dear friend!

Burnt too, my faithful preacher,
Beverley!

¹ Richard II.

Lord give thou power to thy two witnesses!
 Lest the false faith make merry over them!
 Two — nay but thirty-nine have risen and stand,
 Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,
 Before thy light, and cry continually —
 Cry — against whom?
 Hin, who should bear the sword
 Of Justice — what! the kingly, kindly boy;
 Who took the world so easily heretofore,
 My boon companion, tavern-fellow — him
 Who gibed and japed — in many a merry tale
 That shook our sides — at Pardoners,
 Summoners,
 Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries
 And numneries, when the wild hour
 and the wine
 Had set the wits afame.

Harry of Monmouth,
 Or Amurath of the East ?

Better to sink
 Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling
 Thy royalty back into the riotous fits
 Of wine and harlotry — thy shame,
 and mine,
 Thy comrade — than to persecute the Lord,
 And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred Arundel
 Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the flame,
 The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his clerks
 Into the suburb — their hard celibacy,
 Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness,
 molten
 Into adulterous living, or such crimes
 As holy Paul — a shame to speak of them —
 Among the heathen —

Sanctuary granted

To bandit, thief, assassin — yea to him
 Who hacks his mother's throat — denied to him,
 Who finds the Saviour in his mother tongue.
 The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung down to swine —
 The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will come,
 God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.
 Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel, meant
 To course and range thro' all the world, should be
 Tether'd to these dead pillars of the Church —
 Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,
 Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart, and life
 Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,
 O Lord, how long!
 My friend should meet me here.
 Here is the copse, the fountain and — a Cross!
 To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor knees.
 Rather to thee, green boscage, work of God,
 Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfaring-tree!
 Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn
 By this good Wiclf mountain down from heaven,
 And speaking clearly in thy native tongue —
 No Latin — He that thirsteth, come and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me
 To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine arms,
 God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and blood
 And holier. That was heresy. (My good friend
 By this time should be with me.)
 " Images? "
 " Bury them as God's truer images

Are daily buried." "Heresy.—
Penance?" "Fast,
Hairshirt and scourge—nay, let a
man repent,
Do penance in his heart, God hears
him." "Heresy—
Not shriven, not saved?" "What
profits an ill Priest
Between me and my God? I would
not spurn
Good counsel of good friends, but
shrive myself
No, not to an Apostle." "Heresy."
(My friend is long in coming.) "Pil-
grimages?"
Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-
dances, vice.
The poor man's money gone to fat the
friar.
Who reads of begging saints in Scrip-
ture?" — "Heresy"—
(Hath he been here—not found me
—gone again?
Have I mislearnt our place of meet-
ing?) "Bread—
Bread left after the blessing?" how
they stared,
That was their main test-question—
glared at me!
"He veil'd himself in flesh, and now
He veils
His flesh in bread, body and bread
together."
Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd
wolves,
"No bread, no bread. God's body!"
Archbishop, Bishop,
Prior, Canons, Friars, bellringers,
Parish-clerks—
"No bread, no bread!" — "Authority
of the Church,
Power of the keys!" — Then I, God
help me, I
So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two
whole days—
I lost myself and fell from evenness,
And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever
since
Sylvester shed the venom of world-
wealth
Into the church, had only prov'n
themselves

Poisoners, murderers. Well—God
pardon all—
Me, them, and all the world—yea,
that proud Priest,
That mock-meek mouth of utter Anti-
christ,
That traitor to King Richard and the
truth,
Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.
Amen!
Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of
life
Be by me in my death.
Those three! the fourth
Was like the Son of God! Not burnt
were they.
On them the smell of burning had not
past.
That was a miracle to convert the king.
These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel
What miracle could turn? He here
again,
He thwarting their traditions of Him-
self,
He would be found a heretic to Him-
self,
And doom'd to burn alive.
So, caught, I burn.
Burn? heathen men have borne as
much as this,
For freedom, or the sake of those they
loved,
Or some less cause, some cause far
less than mine;
For every other cause is less than
mine.
The moth will singe her wings, and
sing'd return,
Her love of light quenching her fear
of pain—
How now, my soul, we do not heed the
fire?
Faint-hearted? tut! — faint-stom-
ach'd! faint as I am,
God willing, I will burn for Him.
Who comes?
A thousand marks are set upon my
head.
Friend? — foe perhaps—a tussle for
it then!
Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well
disguised,

I knew thee not. Hast thou brought
bread with thee?
I have not broken bread for fifty hours.
None? I am damn'd already by the
Priest
For holding there was bread where
bread was none—
No bread. My friends await me yon-
der? Yes.
Lead on then. Up the mountain?
Is it far?
Not far. Climb first and reach me
down thy hand.
I am not like to die for lack of bread,
For I must live to testify by fire.¹

COLUMBUS.

CHAINS, my good lord: in your raised
brows I read
Some wonder at our chamber orna-
ments.
We brought this iron from our isles
of gold.

Does the king know you deign to
visit him
Whom once he rose from off his
throne to greet
Before his people, like his brother
king?
I saw your face that morning in the
crowd.

At Barcelona — tho' you were not
then
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd
herself
To meet me, roar'd my name; the
king, the queen
Bade me be seated, speak, and tell
them all
The story of my voyage, and while I
spoke
The crowd's roar fell as at the "Peace,
be still!"
And when I ceased to speak, the king,
the queen,
Sank from their thrones, and melted
into tears,

¹ He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

And knelt, and lifted hand and heart
and voice
In praise to God who led me thro' the
waste.
And then the great "Laudamus" rose
to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the
Ocean! chains
For him who gave a new heaven, a
new earth,
As holy John had prophesied of me,
Gave glory and more empire to the
kings
Of Spain than all their battles! chains
for him
Who push'd his prows into the setting
sun,
And made West East, and sail'd the
Dragon's mouth,
And came upon the Mountain of the
World,
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the
Ocean, we,
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic
queen —
Of the Ocean — of the Indies — Ad-
mirals we —
Our title, which we never mean to
yield,
Our guerdon not alone for what we
did,
But our amends for all we might have
done —
The vast occasion of our stronger
life —
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in
your Spain,
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth
the babe
Will suck in with his milk hereafter
— earth
A sphere.

Were you at Salamanca? No.
We fronted there the learning of all
Spain,
All their cosmogonies, their astrono-
mies:

Guess-work they guess'd it, but the golden guess
 Is morning-star to the full round of truth.
 No guess-work! I was certain of my goal;
 Some thought it heresy, but that would not hold.
 King David call'd the heavens a hide,
 a tent
 Spread over earth, and so this earth was flat:
 Some cited old Lactantius: could it be
 That trees grew downward, rain fell upward, men
 Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and besides,
 The great Augustine wrote that none could breathe
 Within the zone of heat; so might there be
 Two Adams, two mankinds, and that was clean
 Against God's word: thus was I beaten back,
 And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,
 And thought to turn my face from Spain, appeal
 Once more to France or England; but our Queen
 Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses
 Were half-assured this earth might be a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,
 All glory to the mother of our Lord,
 And Holy Church, from whom I never swerved
 Not even by one hair's-breadth of heresy,
 I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a dream—I sail'd
 On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights
 Of my first crew, their curses and their groans.
 The great flame-banner borne by Teneriffe,

The compass, like an old friend false at last
 In our most need, appall'd them, and the wind
 Still westward, and the weedy seas—at length
 The landbird, and the branch with berries on it,
 The carven staff—and last the light, the light
 On Guanahani! but I changed the name;
 San Salvador I call'd it; and the light
 Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad sky
 Of dawning over—not those alien palms,
 The marvel of that fair new nature—not
 That Indian isle, but our most ancient East
 Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw
 The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat
 Thro' all the homely town from jasper, sapphire,
 Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,
 Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, Jacynth, and amethyst—and those twelve gates,
 Pearl—and I woke, and thought—death—I shall die—I am written in the Lamb's own Book of Life
 To walk within the glory of the Lord Sunless and moonless, utter light—but no!
 The Lord had sent this bright, strange dream to me
 To mind me of the secret vow I made When Spain was waging war against the Moor—I strove myself with Spain against the Moor.
 There came two voices from the Sepulchre,
 Two friars crying that if Spain should oust
 The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce

Soldan of Egypt, would break down
and raze
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon
I vow'd
That, if our Princes harken'd to my
prayer,
Whatever wealth I brought from that
new world
Should, in this old, be consecrate to
lead
A new crusade against the Saracen,
And free the Holy Sepulchre from
thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes
gold enough
If left alone! Being but a Genovese,
I am handled worse than had I been a
Moor,
And breach'd the belting wall of
Cambalu,
And given the Great Khan's palaces
to the Moor,
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Pres-
ter John,
And cast it to the Moor: but had I
brought
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir
all
The gold that Solomon's navies car-
ried home,
Would that have gilded *me*? Blue
blood of Spain,
Tho' quartering your own royal arms
of Spain,
I have not: blue blood and black blood
of Spain,
The noble and the convict of Cas-
tile,
How'd me from Hispaniola; for you
know
The flies at home, that ever swarm
about
And cloud the highest heads, and
murmur down
Truth in the distance—these out-
buzz'd me so
That even our prudent king, our right-
eous queen—
I pray'd them being so calumniated
They would commission one of weight
and worth

To judge between my slander'd self
and me—
Fonseca my main enemy at their court,
They send me out *his* tool, Bovadilla,
one
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed
— who sack'd
My dwelling, seized upon my papers,
loosed
My captives, feed the rebels of the
crown,
Sold the crown-farms for all but noth-
ing, gave
All but free leave for all to work the
mines,
Drove me and my good brothers home
in chains,
And gathering ruthless gold—a sin-
gle piece
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castil-
lanos—so
They tell me—weigh'd him down
into the abyss—
The hurricane of the latitude on him
fell,
The seas of our discovering over-roll
Him and his gold; the frailler caravel,
With what was mine, came happily to
the shore.
There was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God
Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O
my lord,
I swear to you I heard his voice be-
tween
The thunders in the black Veragua
nights,
“O soul of little faith, slow to believe!
Have I not been about thee from thy
birth?
Given thee the keys of the great
Ocean-sea?
Set thee in light till time shall be no
more?
Is it I who have deceived thee or the
world?
Endure! thou hast done so well for
men, that men
Cry out against thee: was it otherwise
With mine own Son?”

And more than once in days
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when
drowning hope
Sank all but out of sight, I heard his
voice,
"Be not cast down. I lead thee by
the hand,
Fear not." And I shall hear his
voice again—
I know that he has led me all my life,
I am not yet too old to work his will—
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,
I lying here bedridden and alone,
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and
king —
The first discoverer starves — his fol-
lowers, all
Flower into fortune — our world's way
— and I,
Without a roof that I can call mine
own,
With scarce a coin to buy a meal
withal,
And seeing what a door for scoundrel
scum
I open'd to the West, thro' which the
lust,
Villany, violence, avarice, of your
Spain
Pour'd in on all those happy naked
isles —
Their kindly native princes slain or
slaved,
Their wives and children Spanish con-
cubines,
Their innocent hospitalities quench'd
in blood,
Some dead of hunger, some beneath
the scourge,
Some over-labor'd, some by their own
hands, —
Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature,
kill
Their babies at the breast for hate of
Spain —
Ah God, the harmless people whom
we found
In Hispaniola's island-Paradise !
Who took us for the very Gods from
Heaven,

And we have sent them very fiends
from Hell ;
And I myself, myself not blameless, I
Could sometimes wish I had never led
the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic
Queen
Smiles on me, saying, "Be thou com-
forted !
This creedless people will be brought
to Christ
And own the holy governance of
Rome."

But who could dream that we, who
bore the Cross
Thither, were excommunicated there,
For curbing crimes that scandalized
the Cross,
By him, the Catalonian Minorite,
Rome's Vicar in our Indies ? who be-
lieve
These hard memorials of our truth to
Spain
Clung closer to us for a longer term
Than any friend of ours at Court ?
and yet
Pardon — too harsh, unjust. I am
rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by
my bed,
And I will have them buried in my
grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are
God's
Own voice to justify the dead — per-
chance
Spain once the most chivalric race on
earth,
Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest
realm on earth,
So made by me, may seek to unbury
me,
To lay me in some shrine of this old
Spain,
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to
Spain.
Then some one standing by my grave
will say,

"Behold the bones of Christopher Colón"—

"Ay, but the chains, what do they mean—the chains?"—

I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain
Who then will have to answer, "These same chains

Bound these same bones back thro'
the Atlantic sea,
Which he unchain'd for all the world
to come."

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls in Hell
And purgatory, I suffer all as much
As they do—for the moment. Stay, my son
Is here anon: my son will speak for me
Ablier than I can in these spasms that grind
Bone against bone. You will not.
One last word.

You move about the Court, I pray you tell
King Ferdinand who plays with me, that one,
Whose life has been no play with him and his
Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fevers, fights,
Mutinies, treacheries—wink'd at, and condoned—
That I am loyal to him till the death,
And ready—tho' our Holy Catholic Queen,
Who fain had pledged her jewels on my first voyage,
Whose hope was mine to spread the Catholic faith,
Who wept with me when I return'd in chains,
Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,
To whom I send my prayer by night and day—
She is gone—but you will tell the King, that I,
Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd with pains
Gain'd in the service of His Highness, yet

Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage,
And readier, if the King would hear, to lead
One last crusade against the Saracen,
And save the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted: you have dared
Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor thanks!
I am but an alien and a Genovese.

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND.
A.D. 700.)

I.

I WAS the chief of the race—he had stricken my father dead—
But I gather'd my fellows together, I swore I would strike off his head.
Each one of them look'd like a king, and was noble in birth as in worth,
And each of them boasted he sprang from the oldest race upon earth.
Each was as brave in the fight as the bravest hero of song,
And each of them liefer had died than have done one another a wrong.
He lived on an isle in the ocean—we sail'd on a Friday morn—
He that had slain my father the day before I was born.

II.

And we came to the isle in the ocean,
and there on the shore was he.
But a sudden blast blew us out and away thro' a boundless sea.

III.

And we came to the Silent Isle that we never had touch'd at before,
Where a silent ocean always broke on a silent shore,

And the brooks glitter'd on in the light
without sound, and the long
waterfalls
Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the
base of the mountain walls,
And the poplar and cypress unshaken
by storm flourish'd up beyond
sight,
And the pine shot aloft from the crag
to an unbelievable height,
And high in the heaven above it there
flicker'd a songless lark,
And the cock couldn't crow, and the
bull couldn't low, and the dog
couldn't bark.
And round it we went, and thro' it, but
never a murmur, a breath—
It was all of it fair as life, it was all
of it quiet as death,
And we hated the beautiful Isle, for
whenever we strove to speak
Our voices were thinner and fainter
than any flittermouse-shriek;
And the men that were mighty of
tongue and could raise such
a battle-cry
That a hundred who heard it would
rush on a thousand lances and
die—
O they to be dumb'd by the charm!
—so fluster'd with anger were
they
They almost fell on each other; but
after we sail'd away.

IV.

And we came to the Isle of Shouting,
we landed, a score of wild birds
Cried from the topmost summit with
human voices and words;
Once in an hour they cried, and when-
ever their voices peal'd
The steer fell down at the plow and
the harvest died from the field,
And the men dropt dead in the valleys
and half of the cattle went lame,
And the roof sank in on the hearth,
and the dwelling broke into
flame;
And the shouting of these wild birds
ran into the hearts of my crew,

Till they shouted along with the shout-
ing and seized one another and
slew;

But I drew them the one from the
other; I saw that we could not
stay,
And we left the dead to the birds and
we sail'd with our wounded
away.

V.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers:
their breath met us out on the
seas,
For the Spring and the middle Sum-
mer sat each on the lap of the
breeze;
And the red passion-flower to the
cliffs, and the dark-blue ele-
matis, clung,
And starr'd with a myriad blossom
the long convolvulus hung;
And the topmost spire of the moun-
tain was lilies in lieu of snow,
And the lilies like glaciers winded
down, running out below
Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy,
the blaze of gorse, and the
blush
Of millions of roses that sprang with-
out leaf or a thorn from the
bush;
And the whole isle-side flashing down
from the peak without ever a
tree
Swept like a torrent of gems from the
sky to the blue of the sea;
And we roll'd upon capes of crocus
and vaunted our kith and our
kin,
And we wallow'd in beds of lilies,
and chanted the triumph of
Finn,
Till each like a golden image was
pollen'd from head to feet
And each was as dry as a cricket,
with thirst in the middle-day
heat.
Blossom and blossom, and promise of
blossom, but never a fruit!
And we hated the Flowering Isle, as
we hated the isle that was mute,

And we tore up the flowers by the million and flung them in bight and bay,

And we left but a naked rock, and in anger we sail'd away.

VI.

And we came to the Isle of Fruits : all round from the cliffs and the capes,

Purple or amber, dangled a hundred fathom of grapes,

And the warm melon lay like a little sun on the tawny sand,

And the fig ran up from the beach and rioted over the land,

And the mountain arose like a jewell'd throne thro' the fragrant air,

Glowing with all-color'd plums and with golden masses of pear,

And the crimson and scarlet of berries that flamed upon bine and vine,

But in every berry and fruit was the poisonous pleasure of wine ;

And the peak of the mountain was apples, the hugest that ever were seen,

And they prest, as they grew, on each other, with hardly a leaflet between,

And all of them redder than rosiest health or than utterest shame, And setting, when Even descended, the very sunset afame ;

And we stay'd three days, and we gorged and we madden'd, till every one drew

His sword on his fellow to slay him, and ever they struck and they slew ;

And myself, I had eaten but sparingly, and fought till I sunder'd the fray,

Then I bade them remember my father's death, and we sail'd away.

VII.

And we came to the Isle of Fire : we were lured by the light from afar,

For the peak sent up one league of fire to the Northern Star ; Lured by the glare and the blare, but scarcely could stand upright, For the whole isle shudder'd and shook like a man in a mortal affright :

We were giddy besides with the fruits we had gorged, and so crazed that at last

There were some leap'd into the fire ; and away we sail'd, and we past

Over that undersea isle, where the water is clearer than air :

Down we look'd : what a garden ! O bliss, what a Paradise there !

Towers of a happier time, low down in a rainbow deep

Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep !

And three of the gentlest and best of my people, whate'er I could say,

Plunged head down in the sea, and the Paradise trembled away.

VIII.

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where the heavens lean low on the land,

And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd o'er us a sunbright hand,

Then it open'd and dropt at the side of each man, as he rose from his rest,

Bread enough for his need till the laborless day dipt under the West ;

And we wander'd about it and thro' it. O never was time so good !

And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and the boast of our ancient blood,

And we gazed at the wandering wave as we sat by the gurgle of springs,

And we chanted the songs of the Bards and the glories of fairy kings ;

But at length we began to be weary,
to sigh, and to stretch and
yawn,

Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and
the sunbright hand of the
dawn,

For there was not an enemy near, but
the whole green Isle was our
own,

And we took to playing at ball, and
we took to throwing the stone,

And we took to playing at battle, but
that was a perilous play,

For the passion of the battle was in
us, we slew and we sail'd
away.

IX.

And we came to the Isle of Witches
and heard their musical cry —
“Come to us, O come, come” in the
stormy red of a sky

Dashing the fires and the shadows of
dawn on the beautiful shapes,
For a wild witch naked as heaven
stood on each of the loftiest
capes,

And a hundred ranged on the rock
like white sea-birds in a row,

And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced
on the wrecks in the sand be-
low,

And a hundred splash'd from the
ledges, and bosom'd the burst
of the spray,

But I knew we should fall on each
other, and hastily sail'd away.

X.

And we came in an evil time to the
Isle of the Double Towers,
One was of smooth-cut stone, one
carved all over with flowers,

But an earthquake always moved in
the hollows under the dells,

And they shock'd on each other and
butted each other with clashing
of bells,

And the daws flew out of the Towers
and jangled and wrangled in
vain,

And the clash and boom of the bells
rang into the heart and the brain,

Till the passion of battle was on us,
and all took sides with the
Towers,

There were some for the clean-cut
stone, there were more for the
carven flowers,

And the wrathful thunder of God
peal'd over us all the day,
For the one half slew the other and
after we sail'd away.

XI.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint
who had sail'd with St. Brendan
of yore,

He had lived ever since on the Isle
and his winters were fifteen score,
And his voice was low as from other
worlds, and his eyes were
sweet,

And his white hair sank to his heels
and his white beard fell to his
feet,

And he spake to me, “O Maeldune,
let be this purpose of thine!

Remember the words of the Lord
when he told us ‘Vengeance is
mine!’

His fathers have slain thy fathers
in war or in single strife,

Thy fathers have slain his fathers,
each taken a life for a life,
Thy father had slain his father, how
long shall the murder last?

Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer
the Past to be Past.”

And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard
and we pray'd as we heard him
pray,

And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and
sadly we sail'd away.

XII.

And we came to the Isle we were blown
from, and there on the shore
was he,

The man that had slain my father. I
saw him and let him be.

O weary was I of the travel, the
trouble, the strife and the sin,
When I landed again, with a tithe of
my men, on the Isle of Finn.

DE PROFUNDIS:

THE TWO GREETINGS.

I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Where all that was to be, in all that was,
Whirl'd for a million aeons thro' the vast
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy-
ing light —
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Thro' all this changing world of changeless law,
And every phase of ever-heightening life,
And nine long months of antenatal gloom,
With this last moon, this crescent —
her dark orb
Touch'd with earth's light — thou comest, darling boy ;
Our own ; a babe in lineament and limb
Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man ;
Whose face and form are hers and mine in one,
Indissolubly married like our love ;
Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve
This mortal race thy kin so well, that men
May bless thee as we bless thee, O young life
Breaking with laughter from the dark ; and may
The fated channel where thy motion lives
Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy course
Along the years of haste and random youth
Unshatter'd ; then full-current thro' full man ;
And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,
By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,

To that last deep where we and thou are still.

II.

I.

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that great deep, before our world begins,
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will —
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that true world within the world we see,
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore —
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,
With this ninth moon, that sends the hidden sun
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy.

II.

For in the world, which is not ours, They said
“ Let us make man ” and that which should be man,
From that one light no man can look upon,
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and moons
And all the shadows. O dear Spirit half-lost
In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign
That thou art thou — who wailest being born
And banish'd into mystery, and the pain
Of this divisible-indivisible world
Among the numerable-innumerable Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite space
In finite-infinite Time — our mortal veil
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite One,
Who made thee unconceivably Thyself
Out of His whole World-self and all in all —

Live thou! and of the grain and husk,
the grape
And ivyberry, choose; and still depart
From death to death thro' life and
life, and find
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who
wrought
Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,
But this main-miracle, that thou art
thou,
With power on thine own act and on
the world.

THE HUMAN CRY.

I.

HALLOWED be Thy name—Hallelujah!—
Infinite Ideality!
Immeasurable Reality!
Infinite Personality!
Hallowed be Thy name—Hallelujah!

II.

We feel we are nothing—for all is
Thou and in Thee;
We feel we are something—that also
has come from Thee;
We know we are nothing—but Thou
wilt help us to be.
Hallowed be Thy name—Hallelujah!

PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE "NINETEENTH CENTURY."

THOSE that of late had fleeted far and
fast
To touch all shores, now leaving to
the skill
Of others their old craft seaworthy still,
Have charter'd this; where, mindful
of the past,
Our true co-mates regather round the
mast;
Of diverse tongue, but with a com-
mon will
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil
And crocus, to put forth and brave
the blast;
For some, descending from the sacred
peak

Of hoar high-templed Faith, have
leagued again
Their lot with ours to rove the world
about;
And some are wilder comrades, sworn
to seek
If any golden harbor be for men
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of
Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOK-
FIELD.

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that
knew you best,
Old Brooks, who loved so well to
mouth my rhymes,
How oft we two have heard St. Mary's
chimes!
How oft the Cantab supper, host and
guest,
Would echo helpless laughter to your
jest!
How oft with him we paced that walk
of lines,
Him, the lost light of those dawn-
golden times,
Who loved you well! Now both are
gone to rest.
You man of humorous-melancholy
mark,
Dead of some inward agony—is it so?
Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past
away!
I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:
Σκιᾶς έναρ—dream of a shadow, go—
God bless you. I shall join you in a day.

MONTENEGRO.

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle
sails,
They kept their faith, their freedom,
on the height,
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day
and night
Against the Turk; whose Inroad no-
where scales
Their headlong passes, but his foot-
step fails,

And red with blood the Crescent reels
from fight
Before their dauntless hundreds, in
prone flight
By thousands down the crags and
thro' the vales.
O smallest among peoples! rough
rock-throne
Of Freedom! warriors beating back
the swarm
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred
years,
Great Tsernogora! never since thine
own
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake
the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier
mountaineers.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes
and fears,

French of the French, and Lord of
human tears;
Child lover; Bard whose fame-lit
laurels glance
Darkening the wreaths of all that
would advance,
Beyond our strait, their claim to be
thy peers;
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of
years
As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of
France!
Who dost not love our England — so
they say;
I know not — England, France, all
man to be
Will make one people ere man's race
be run:
And I, desiring that diviner day,
Yield thee full thanks for thy full
courtesy
To younger England in the boy my
son.

TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH.

Constantinus, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.

I.

¹ATHELSTAN King,
Lord among Earls,
Bracelet-bestower and
Baron of Barons,
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,
Gaining a lifelong
Glory in battle,

Slew with the sword-edge
There by Brunanburh,
Brake the shield-wall,
Hew'd the linden-wood,
Hack'd the battleshield,
Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

II.

Theirs was a greatness
Got from their Grandsires —
Theirs that so often in
Strife with their enemies
Struck for their hoards and their
hearts and their homes.

III.

Bow'd the spoiler,
Bent the Scotsman,

¹ Shields of lindenwood.

¹ I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the *Contemporary Review* (November 1876).

Fell the shipcrews
Doom'd to the death.
All the field with blood of the fighters
Flow'd, from when first the great
Sun-star of morningtide,
Lamp of the Lord God
Lord everlasting,
Glode over earth till the glorious
creature
Sank to his setting.

IV.

There lay many a man
Marr'd by the javelin,
Men of the Northland
Shot over shield.
There was the Scotsman
Weary of war.

V.

We the West-Saxons,
Long as the daylight
Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that
we hated,
Grimly with swords that were sharp
from the grindstone,
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before
us.

VI.

Mighty the Mercian,
Hard was his hand-play,
Sparing not any of
Those that with Anlaf,
Warriors over the
Weltering waters
Borne in the bark's-bosom,
Drew to this island :
Doom'd to the death.

VII.

Five young kings put asleep by the
sword-stroke,
Seven strong Earls of the army of
Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless
numbers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

VIII.

Then the Norse leader,
Dire was his need of it,
Few were his following,

Fled to his warship :
Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king
in it,
Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX.

Also the crafty one,
Constantinus,
Crept to his North again,
Hoar-headed hero !

X.

Slender warrant had
He to be proud of
The welcome of war-knives —
He that was left of his
Folk and his friends that had
Fallen in conflict,
Leaving his son too
Lost in the carnage,
Mangled to morsels,
A youngster in war !

XI.

Slender reason had
He to be glad of
The clash of the war-glaive —
Traitor and trickster
And spurner of treaties —
He nor had Anlaf
With armies so broken
A reason for bragging
That they had the better
In perils of battle
On places of slaughter —
The struggle of standards,
The rush of the javelins,
The crash of the charges,
The wieldling of weapons —
The play that they play'd with
The children of Edward.

XII.

Then with their nail'd prows
Parted the Norsemen, a
Blood-redden'd relic of
Javelins over
The jarring breaker, the deep-
sea billow,
Shaping their way toward Dy-
flen ² again,
Shamed in their souls.

¹ Lit. "the gathering of men." ² Dublin.

XIII.

Also the brethren,
King and Atheling,
Each in his glory,
Went to his own in his own West-Saxonland,
Glad of the war.

XIV.

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,
Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin —
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it, and
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend it, and
Gave to the garbagging war-hawk to gorge it, and
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

XV.

Never had huger
Slaughter of heroes
Slain by the sword-edge —
Such as old writers
Have writ of in histories —
Hapt in this isle, since
Up from the East hither
Saxon and Angle from
Over the broad billow
Broke into Britain with
Haughty war-workers who
Harried the Welshman, when
Earls that were lured by the
Hunger of glory gat
Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH.

ILIADE, xviii. 202.

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus ; and round
The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas flung
Her fringed aegis, and around his head
The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden cloud,

And from it lighted an all-shining flame,
As when a smoke from a city goes to heaven
Far off from out an island girt by foes,
All day the men contend in grievous war
From their own city, but with set of sun
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the glare
Flies streaming, if perchance the neighbors round
May see, and sail to help them in the war ;
So from his head the splendor went to heaven.
From wall to dyke he stept, he stood, nor join'd
The Achaeans — honoring his wise mother's word —
There standing, shouted, and Pallas far away
Call'd ; and a boundless panic shook the foe.
For like the clear voice when a trumpet shrills,
Blown by the fierce beleaguerers of a town,
So rang the clear voice of Æakidès ;
And when the brazen cry of Æakidès
Was heard among the Trojans, all their hearts
Were troubled, and the full-maned horses whirl'd
The chariots backward, knowing griefs at hand ;
And sheer-astounded were the chariooteers
To see the dread, unwearable fire
That always o'er the great Pelcione's head
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess made it burn.
Thrice from the dyke he sent his mighty shout,
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans and allies ;
And there and then twelve of their noblest died
Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA
ON HER MARRIAGE.

O you that were eyes and light to the
King till he past away
From the darkness of life—
He saw not his daughter—he blest
her: the blind King sees you
to-day,
He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

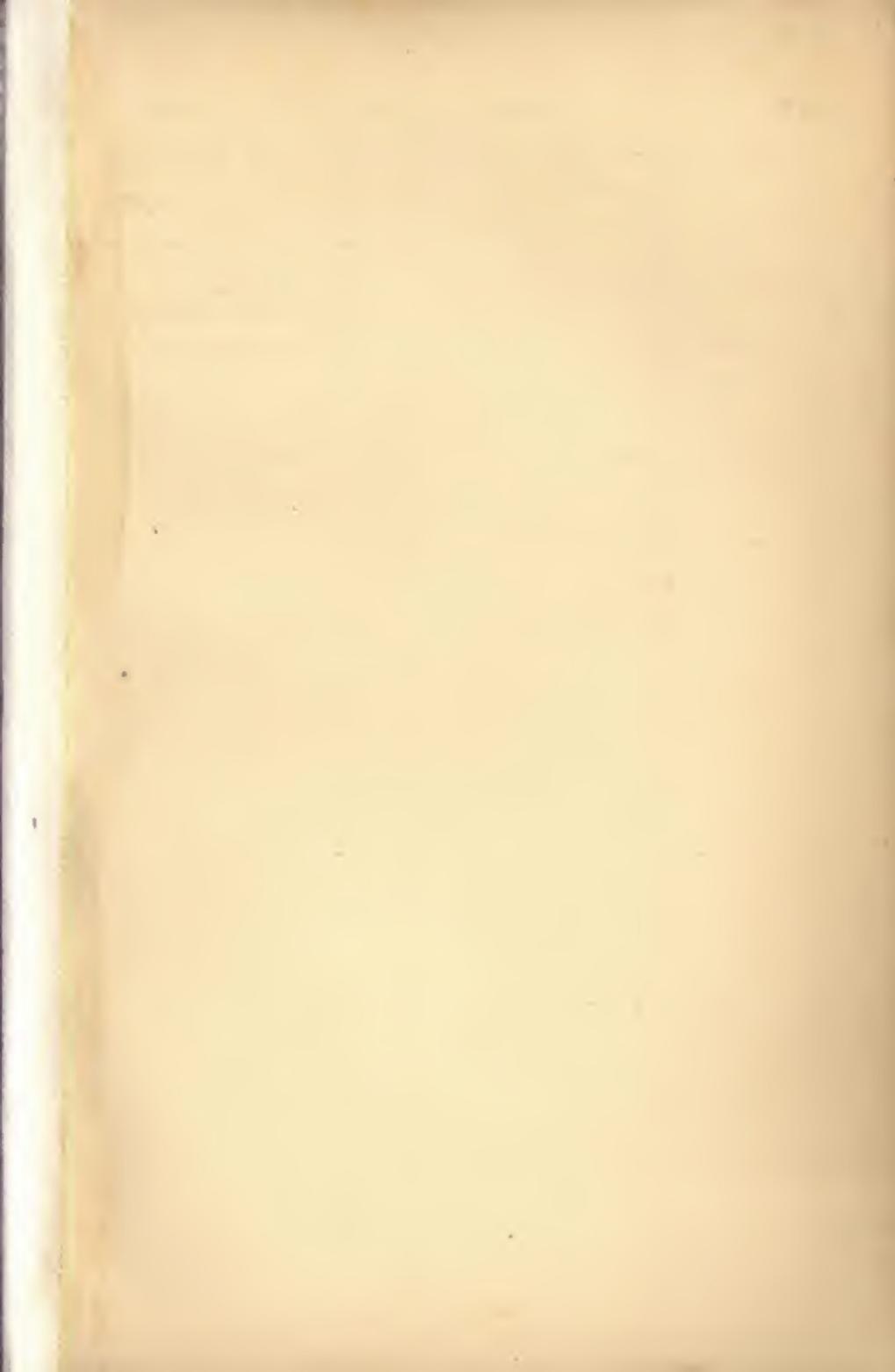
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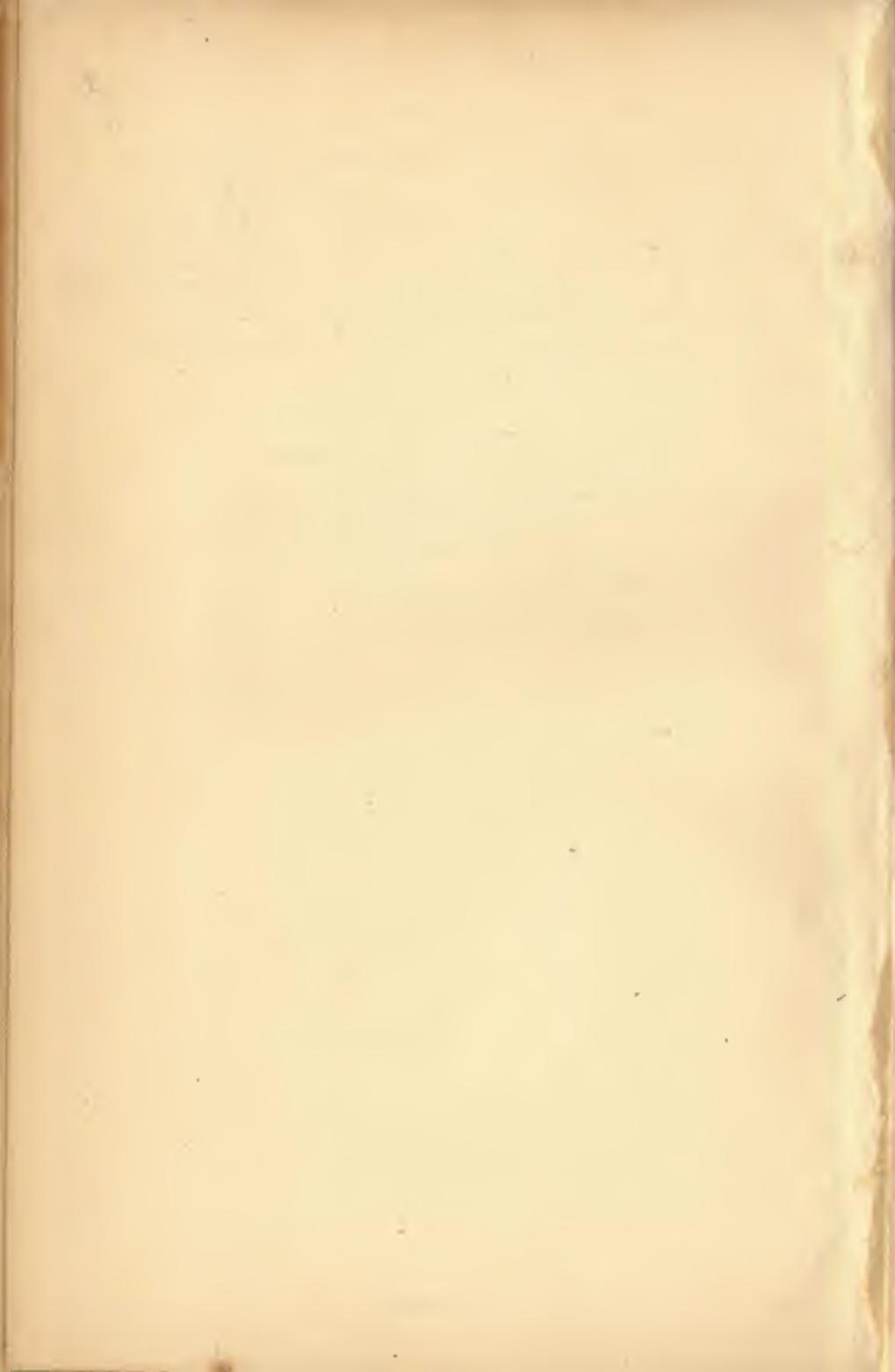
NOT here! the white North has thy
bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thine happier voyage
now
Toward no earthly pole.

TO DANTE.

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLORENTINES.)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years, and grown
In power, and ever growest, since thine own
Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,
I, wearing but the garland of a day,
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.







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